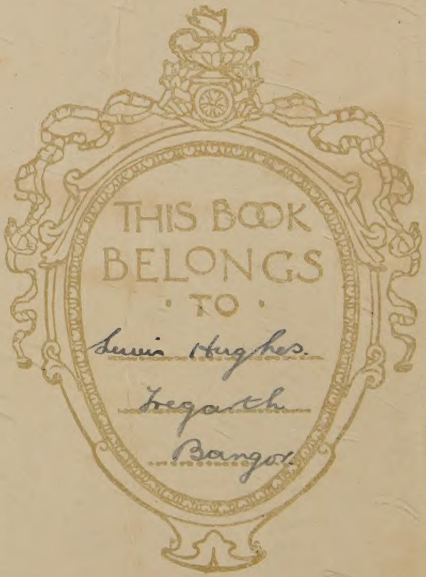
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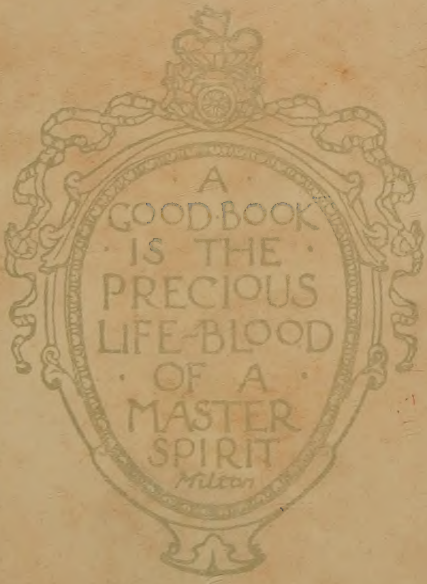
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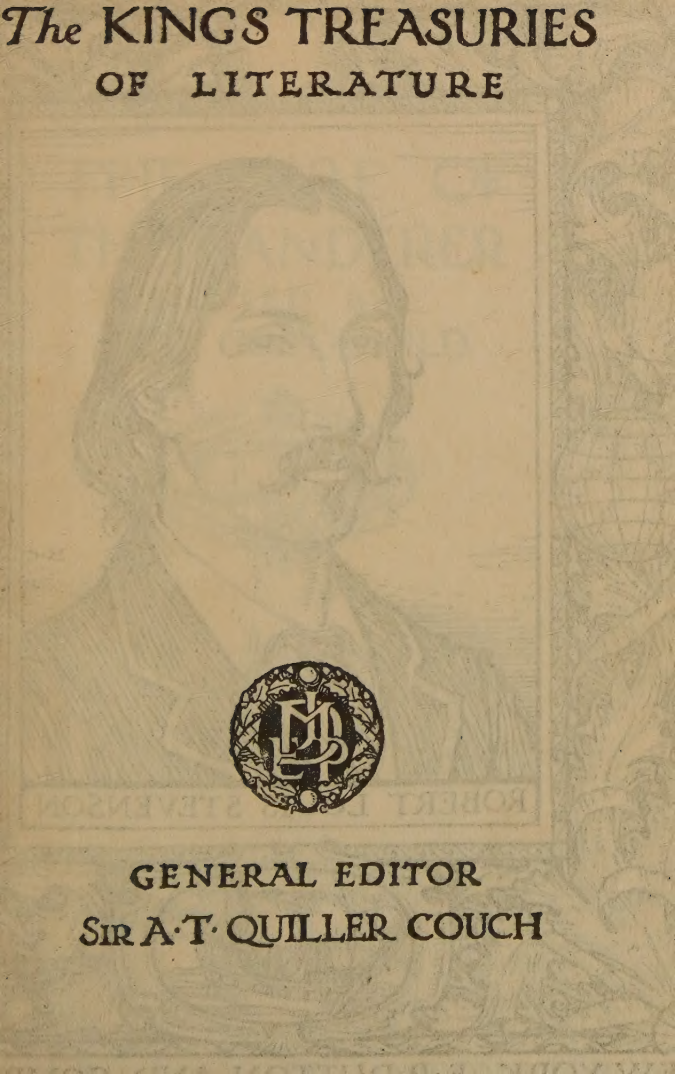

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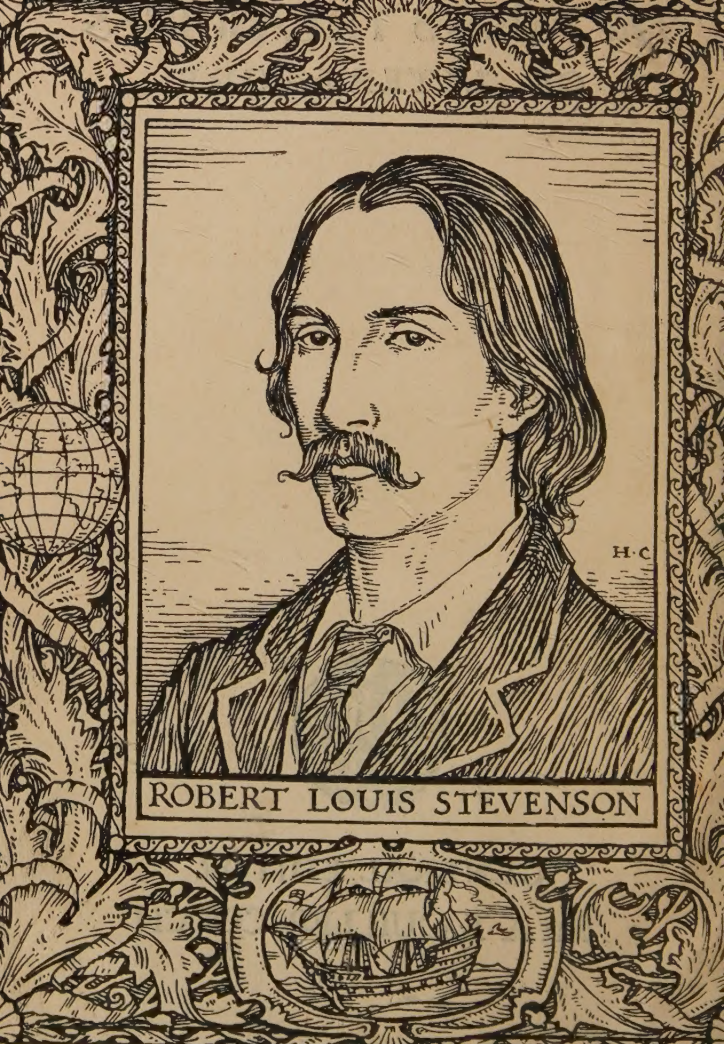

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THE LORE OF THE WANDERER

EDITED BY

GEO. GOODCHILD

WITH

NOTES & COMMENTARY

BY F·W·TICKNER

D. LIT.· M. A.· B.Sc

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EDITOR'S NOTE TO FIRST EDITION

I AM indebted to Messrs. Chatto & Windus for permission to include Stevenson's *Forest Notes, Walking Tours, A Night Among the Pines,* and Jefferies' *Pageant of Summer,* also to Messrs. Smith, Elder for permission to include the *Venetian Sketches,* by John Addington Symonds.

G. G.

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WALKING TOURS

R. L. STEVENSON

It must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettanti, than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who is indeed of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours —of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a

Walking Tours. This essay was first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for June, 1876. It is to be found also in *Virginibus Puerisque*, a volume of Stevenson's collected essays.

reward in itself, but will be further rewarded in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your overwalker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curaçoa in liqueur glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown John. He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this unconscionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalise himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double nightcap; and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanted. It is the fate of such an one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes further and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should

Curaçoa. A liqueur made of brandy, orange peel and cinnamon. Liqueurs are cordials which are drunk in small glasses and not in *brown Johns, i.e.,* in large mugs or other vessels. It is not clear what Stevenson means by a brown John, there may be a confusion in his mind between (1) brown George, a brown earthenware vessel or pitcher; (2) black Jack, a large leathern beer jug, and (3) demijohn, a large bottle with bulging body and narrow neck.

be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else and more in the nature of a picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak takes you; and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. "I cannot see the wit," says Hazlitt, "of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country,"—which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly towards his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge and, like Christian on a similar occasion, "give three leaps and go on singing." And yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed

the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best. Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah's chest and walk arm-in-arm with the hag—why, wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness, one after another of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles upon the road. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes, is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom, weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragon-flies; he leans on the gate of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as

Abudah. A rich merchant of Bagdad with everything he required, who was however unable to drive away the terrors of the night, for when he retired to rest, a little box which no art could remove from its place, advanced to the centre of his chamber, and opening disclosed a diminutive old hag, who told him he could never be rid of her till he obtained the talisman of Oromanes, which proved to be that he must obey God and love His commandments. See *Tales of the Genii*, translated by Sir Charles Morell.

indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews, by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across no stolid peasant at a corner; for on such an occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour, or the unfeigned alarm of your clown. A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing of the common tramp, can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears when, as described above, the inauspicious peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you should think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay *On Going a Journey*, which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it:—

"Give me the clear blue sky over my head," says

Troubadour. The troubadours were poets of Provence in South France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Here the troubadour is the singer, as the stolid peasant is the clown.

he, " and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy."

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be as dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day: three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure!

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually neutralises and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we

think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes; but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire and brooding on his own private thought!

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from the one extreme towards the other. He becomes more and more incorporated with the material landscape, and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is the more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical well-being, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others, and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at

you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day, that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sundays, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket! It is to be noticed, there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his

treasure," says Milton, "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness." And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog; at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book—and you will never do so save by fits and starts—you find the language strangely racy and harmonious; words take a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half-an-hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look back with special favour. "It was on the 10th of April, 1798," says Hazlitt, with amorous precision, "that I sat down to a volume of the *New Héloïse*, at the Inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken." I should wish to quote more, for

Héloïse. See Hazlitt's essay, p. 75.

though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of Hazlitt's essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine's songs; and for *Tristram Shandy* I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Joviality to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with any one, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your own hobbies, to watch provincial humours develop themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the

Heine's songs. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) was one of the most important German writers of his time, and of his works his *Songs* are probably the finest and most popular. Cf. p. 56.

Tristram Shandy. One of the most remarkable books in English literature; the work of Laurence Sterne (1713–68), a Yorkshire parson, who commenced to write at the age of forty-six. His work influenced Stevenson greatly.

fire. You may remember how Burns, numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he has been "happy thinking." It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by clocks and chimes, and haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates. For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realise, and castles in the fire to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil, that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate, —to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy, and

Burns. I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I hae been happy thinking.
Amang the Rigs o' Barley.

yet content to remain where and what you are—is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that, you are in the very humour of all social heresy. It is no time for shuffling, or for big, empty words. If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco-pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddlestick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content; when suddenly the mood changes, the weather-cock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether, for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys? Human experience is not yet able to reply; but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether

Philistines. Matthew Arnold applied this name to the English middle classes, whom he considered to be deficient in liberal culture, and too keenly engaged on making money.

it was wise or foolish, to-morrow's travel will carry you, body and mind, into some different parish of the infinite.

Many essays have been written in praise of walking, and the reader will find it profitable to compare this essay with Hazlitt's essay on p. 65, or with one or more of the following: L. Stephen, *In Praise of Walking*; G. M. Trevelyan, essay on "Walking" in *Clio a Muse*; Burroughs, *The Exhilaration of the Road*; Thoreau, *Walking and the Wild*.

A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

R. L. STEVENSON

FROM Bleymard after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the Lozère. An ill-marked stony drove-road guided me forward; and I met nearly half-a-dozen bullock-carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little spout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap. "In a more sacred or sequestered bower . . . nor nymph nor faunus haunted." The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade: there was no

A Night Among the Pines. From *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, a series of essays describing an eleven days' journey in the Cevennes, which Stevenson undertook in September, 1878. It was a walking tour with a donkey, named by him Modestine, to carry his luggage. Modestine, he tells us, was "a diminutive she-ass, not much bigger than a dog, the colour of a mouse, with a kindly eye and a determined under-jaw."

In a more sacred, etc.

> "In shadier bower
> More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
> Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph,
> Nor Faunus haunted."
>
> *Paradise Lost*, iv. 705-708.

outlook, except north-eastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down, I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same hour to life? Do the stars rain down an influence, or do we share some thrill of mother earth below

our resting bodies? Even shepherds and old country-folk, who are the deepest read in these arcana, have not a guess as to the means or purpose of this nightly resurrection. Towards two in the morning they declare the thing takes place; and neither know nor inquire further. And at least it is a pleasant incident. We are disturbed in our slumber only, like the luxurious Montaigne, "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look upon the stars. And there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse with all outdoor creatures in our neighbourhood, that we have escaped out of the Bastille of civilisation, and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.

When the hour came to me among the pines, I wakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersion, sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, coloured, and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapour stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack-saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of

Montaigne (1533–92). A French writer of aristocratic birth and sympathies, whose essays were the first of their kind in modern literature. His tendency to present an Epicurean view of life will account for the epithet luxurious.

Bastille. Fortress prison of Paris, which was the outward symbol of the tyranny which resulted in the French Revolution, as its fall was the sign of the downfall of that tyrannical system.

her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward; but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the colour of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a reddish grey behind the pines to where it showed a glossy blue-black between the stars. As if to be more like a pedlar, I wear a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at Chasseradès and the congregated nightcaps; with horror of the nocturnal prowesses of clerks and students, of hot theatres and pass-keys and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle habitable place; and night after night a man's bed,

Inn at Chasseradès. He had slept here the evening before. "The company in the inn kitchen that night were all men employed in survey for one of the projected railways. . . . There were four beds in the little upstairs room: and we slept six. But I had a bed to myself, and persuaded them to leave the window open. . . . The room was full of a transparent darkness, which dimly showed me the other three beds and the five different nightcaps on the pillows."

it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists: at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high-road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good-will than grace in his performance; but he trolled with ample lungs; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities; some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a

thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double: first, this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again (Sunday, 29th September), many of the stars had disappeared; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead; and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. I lit my lantern, and by its glow-worm light put on my boots and gaiters; then I broke up some bread for Modestine, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spirit-lamp to boil some chocolate. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected; but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light, and that, indeed, shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

I drank my water-chocolate, which was hot if it was not rich, and strolled here and there, and up and

down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing. The trees near at hand tossed their black plumes in its passage; and I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes after, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle the steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent, and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as

Caravanserai. An Eastern inn where caravans put up for the night. Stevenson prefixes to this section of the book the following quotation:—

> "The bed was made, the room was fit,
> By punctual eve the stars were lit;
> The air was still, the water ran;
> No need was there for maid or man,
> When we put up, my ass and I,
> At God's green caravanserai."
>
> OLD PLAY.

I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and churlish drover.

Read in the book from which this extract is taken, the essay "A Camp in the Dark," which describes another night spent by Stevenson in the open air, while journeying in the Cevennes; and see Belloc, *Path to Rome*, pp. 74 ff. (Nelson edition).

FOREST NOTES

R. L. STEVENSON

On the Plain

Perhaps the reader knows already the aspect of the great levels of the Gâtinais, where they border with the wooded hills of Fontainebleau. Here and there a few grey rocks creep out of the forest as if to sun themselves. Here and there a few apple-trees stand together on a knoll. The quaint, undignified tartan of a myriad small fields dies out into the distance; the strips blend and disappear; and the dead flat lies forth open and empty, with no accident save perhaps a thin line of trees or faint church spire against the sky. Solemn and vast at all times, in spite of pettiness in the near details, the impression becomes more solemn and vast towards evening. The sun goes down, a swollen orange, as it were into the sea. A

Forest Notes. These Essays were originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine.* They are to be found among Stevenson's *Juvenilia* in the complete edition of his Works, edited by his friend, Sidney Colvin.

The Fontainebleau Forest here referred to is a favourite haunt of the artists of all nationalities who study in Paris. Stevenson's favourite haunts in it were Grez and Barbizon, the home of Millet, and the scene of some of his famous pictures. The places mentioned in these *Forest Notes* are all associated with this region.

blue-clad peasant rides home, with a harrow smoking behind him among the dry clods. Another still works with his wife in their little strip. An immense shadow fills the plain; these people stand in it up to their shoulders; and their heads, as they stoop over their work and rise again, are relieved from time to time against the golden sky.

These peasant farmers are well off nowadays, and not by any means overworked; but somehow you always see in them the historical representative of the serf of yore, and think not so much of present times, which may be prosperous enough, as of the old days when the peasant was taxed beyond possibility of payment, and lived, in Michelet's image, like a hare between two furrows. These very people now weeding their patch under the broad sunset, that very man and his wife, it seems to us, have suffered all the wrongs of France. It is they who have been their country's scapegoat for long ages; they who, generation after generation, have sowed and not reaped, reaped and another has garnered; and who have now entered into their reward, and enjoy their good things in their turn. For the days are gone by when the Seigneur ruled and profited. "Le Seigneur," says the old formula, "enferme ses manants comme

Michelet (1798–1874). French historian and miscellaneous writer; Professor of History at the Collège de France.

Le Seigneur, etc. The Lord of the Manor shuts in his serfs as under door and hinges (lock and key) from sky to earth. Everything is his, the oak forest, the bird in the air, the fish in the water, the beast in the thicket, the running water, the bell whose sound reaches a great way off.

sous porte et gonds, du ciel à la terre. Tout est à lui, forêt chenue, oiseau dans l'air, poisson dans l'eau, bête au buisson, l'onde qui coule, la cloche dont le son au loin roule." Such was his old state of sovereignty, a local god rather than a mere king. And now you may ask yourself where he is, and look round for vestiges of my late lord, and in all the country-side there is no trace of him but his forlorn and fallen mansion. At the end of a long avenue, now sown with grain, in the midst of a close full of cypresses and lilacs, ducks and crowing chanticleers and droning bees, the old château lifts its red chimneys and peaked roofs and turning vanes into the wind and sun. There is a glad spring bustle in the air, perhaps, and the lilacs are all in flower, and the creepers green about the broken balustrade: but no spring shall revive the honour of the place. Old women of the people, little children of the people, saunter and gambol in the walled court or feed the ducks in the neglected moat. Plough-horses, mighty of limb, browse in the long stables. The dial-hand on the clock waits for some better hour. Out on the plain, where hot sweat trickles into men's eyes, and the spade goes in deep and comes up slowly, perhaps the peasant may feel a movement of joy at his heart when he thinks that these spacious chimneys are now cold, which have so often blazed and flickered upon gay folk at supper, while he and his hollow-eyed children watched through the night with empty bellies and cold feet. And perhaps, as he raises his head and sees the forest lying like a coast-line of low hills along the sea-like level of the plain, perhaps

forest and château hold no unsimilar place in his affections.

If the château was my lord's, the forest was my lord the king's; neither of them for this poor Jacques. If he thought to eke out his meagre way of life by some petty theft of wood for the fire, or for a new roof-tree, he found himself face to face with a whole department, from the Grand Master of the Woods and Waters, who was a high-born lord, down to the common sergeant, who was a peasant like himself, and wore stripes or a bandolier by way of uniform. For the first offence, by the Salic law, there was a fine of fifteen sols; and should a man be taken more than once in fault, or circumstances aggravate the colour of his guilt, he might be whipped, branded, or hanged. There was a hangman over at Melun, and, I doubt not, a fine tall gibbet hard by the town gate, where Jacques might see his fellows dangle against the sky as he went to market.

And then, if he lived near to a cover, there would be the more hares and rabbits to eat out his harvest, and the more hunters to trample it down. My lord has a new horn from England. He has laid out seven

Jacques. Jacques Bonhomme, the generic name for the French peasant.

Grand Master, etc. The Forest was placed by Francis I. under the jurisdiction of a set of officers, under a Grand Master.

Salic law. Code of laws formed by the Salian Franks in the fifth century. The best known law of this code is the one excluding women from inheriting landed property, and therefore from the succession to the crown.

Sol. Old French copper coin now displaced by the five-centime coin known as a *sou*.

francs in decorating it with silver and gold, and fitting it with a silken leash to hang about his shoulder. The hounds have been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Mesmer, or Saint Hubert in the Ardennes, or some other holy intercessor who has made a speciality of the health of hunting-dogs. In the grey dawn the game was turned and the branch broken by our best piqueur. A rare day's hunting lies before us. Wind a jolly flourish, sound the *bien-aller* with all your lungs. Jacques must stand by, hat in hand, while the quarry and hound and huntsman sweep across his field, and a year's sparing and labouring is as though it had not been. If he can see the ruin with a good enough grace, who knows but he may fall in favour with my lord; who knows but his son may become the last and least among the servants at his lordship's kennel—one of the two poor varlets who get no wages and sleep at night among the hounds?

For all that, the forest has been of use to Jacques, not only warming him with fallen wood, but giving him shelter in days of sore trouble, when my lord of the château, with all his troopers and trumpets, had been beaten from field after field into some ultimate

Saint Mesmer, etc. Patron saints of hunters and hunting. The story of St. Hubert's sudden conversion while hunting on Good Friday, through the appearance of a stag bearing a crucifix on its horns, is well known.

Piqueur. Huntsman, whipper-in.

Bien-aller. A hunting term, like the English " hark-away."

Quarry. Object of the chase.

Varlets, etc. " Deux poures varlez qui n'ont nulz gages et qui gissoient la nuit avec les chiens."—Champollion-Figeac, *Louis et Charles d'Orléans*, i. 63.

fastness, or lay over-seas in an English prison. In these dark days, when the watch on the church-steeple saw the smoke of burning villages on the sky-line, or a clump of spears and fluttering pennons drawing nigh across the plain, these good folk gat them up, with all their household gods, into the wood, whence, from some high spur, their timid scouts might overlook the coming and going of the marauders, and see the harvest ridden down, and church and cottage go up to heaven all night in flame. It was but an unhomely refuge that the woods afforded, where they must abide all change of weather and keep house with wolves and vipers. Often there was none left alive, when they returned, to show the old divisions of field from field. And yet, as times went, when the wolves entered at night into depopulated Paris, and perhaps De Retz was passing by with a company of demons like himself, even in these caves and thickets there were glad hearts and grateful prayers.

Once or twice, as I say, in the course of the ages, the forest may have served the peasant well, but at heart it is a royal forest, and noble by old associations. These woods have rung to the horns of all the kings of France from Philip Augustus downwards. They have seen Saint Louis exercise the dogs he brought with him from Egypt; Francis I. go a-hunting with

De Retz. Cardinal of the French Church in the early seventeenth century. His early life was infamous on account of his riotous behaviour.

Kings of France. Philip Augustus was king from 1180 to 1223; Saint Louis (Louis IX.), 1226 to 1270; Francis I., 1515 to 1547.

ten thousand horses in his train; and Peter of Russia following his first stag. And so they are still haunted for the imagination by royal hunts and progresses, and peopled with the faces of memorable men of yore. And this distinction is not only in virtue of the pastime of dead monarchs. Great events, great revolutions, great cycles in the affairs of men, have here left their note, here taken shape in some significant and dramatic situation. It was hence that Guise and his leaguers led Charles the Ninth a prisoner to Paris. Here, booted and spurred, and with all his dogs about him, Napoleon met the Pope beside a woodland cross. Here, on his way to Elba not so long after, he kissed the eagle of the Old Guard, and spoke words of passionate farewell to his soldiers. And here, after Waterloo, rather than yield its ensign to the new power, one of his faithful regiments burned that memorial of so much toil and glory on the Grand Master's table, and drank its dust in brandy, as a devout priest consumes the remnants of the Host.

Peter of Russia. Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, lived 1672–1725.

Guise and his leaguers. The Duke of Guise was the leader of the Catholic party against the Huguenots. In this capacity he entered Paris, 1562, in opposition to Catherine de' Medici, who was ruling for her son Charles IX. She and Charles then retired to Fontainebleau, but Guise compelled them to return, Charles crying " as if they were taking him to prison."

Napoleon met the Pope. Pope Pius VII. visited France in 1804 to crown Napoleon Emperor. Napoleon met the Pope in the Fontainebleau forest, while hunting with a party of his friends.

Grand Master's table. A table of stone in the forest, situated upon the Route Ronde.

Host. Sacrifice of the Mass.

Idle Hours

The woods by night, in all their uncanny effect, are not rightly to be understood until you can compare them with the woods by day. The stillness of the medium, the floor of glittering sand, these trees that go streaming up like monstrous sea-weeds and waver in the moving winds like the weeds in submarine currents, all these set the mind working on the thought of what you may have seen off a foreland or over the side of a boat, and make you feel like a diver, down in the quiet water, fathoms below the tumbling, transitory surface of the sea. And yet in itself, as I say, the strangeness of these nocturnal solitudes is not to be felt fully without the sense of contrast. You must have risen in the morning and seen the woods as they are by day, kindled and coloured in the sun's light; you must have felt the odour of innumerable trees at even, the unsparing heat along the forest roads, and the coolness of the groves.

And on the first morning you will doubtless rise betimes. If you have not been wakened before by the visit of some adventurous pigeon, you will be wakened as soon as the sun can reach your window—for there are no blinds or shutters to keep him out—and the room, with its bare wood floor and bare white-washed walls, shines all round you in a sort of glory of reflected lights. You may doze a while longer by snatches, or lie awake to study the charcoal men and dogs and horses with which former occupants have

defiled the partitions: Thiers, with wily profile; local celebrities, pipe in hand; or, maybe, a romantic landscape splashed in oil. Meanwhile artist after artist drops into the salle-à-manger for coffee, and then shoulders easel, sunshade, stool, and paint-box, bound into a fagot, and sets off for what he calls his "motive." And artist after artist, as he goes out of the village, carries with him a little following of dogs. For the dogs, who belong only nominally to any special master, hang about the gate of the forest all day long, and whenever any one goes by who hits their fancy, profit by his escort, and go forth with him to play an hour or two at hunting. They would like to be under the trees all day. But they cannot go alone. They require a pretext. And so they take the passing artist as an excuse to go into the woods, as they might take a walking-stick as an excuse to bathe. With quick ears, long spines, and bandy legs, or perhaps as tall as a greyhound and with a bulldog's head, this company of mongrels will trot by your side all day and come home with you at night, still showing white teeth and wagging stunted tail. Their good humour is not to be exhausted. You may pelt them with stones if you please, and all they will do is to give you a wider berth. If once they come out with you, to you they will remain faithful, and with you return; although if you meet

Thiers (1797–1877). French journalist and statesman. Showed great ability during the crisis of 1870–71, and, after the fall of Paris, was made President of the newly-formed French Republic.

Motive. That which suggests to the artist the undertaking of his subject; and the guiding or controlling idea in his picture.

them next morning in the street, it is as like as not they will cut you with a countenance of brass.

The forest—a strange thing for an Englishman—is very destitute of birds. This is no country where every patch of wood among the meadows gives up an increase of song, and every valley wandered through by a streamlet rings and reverberates from side to side with a profusion of clear notes. And this rarity of birds is not to be regretted on its own account only. For the insects prosper in their absence, and become as one of the plagues of Egypt. Ants swarm in the hot sand; mosquitoes drone their nasal drone; wherever the sun finds a hole in the roof of the forest, you see a myriad transparent creatures coming and going in the shaft of light; and even between-whiles, even where there is no incursion of sun-rays into the dark arcade of the wood, you are conscious of a continual drift of insects, an ebb and flow of infinitesimal living things between the trees. Nor are insects the only evil creatures that haunt the forest. For you may plump into a cave among the rocks, and find yourself face to face with a wild boar, or see a crooked viper slither across the road.

Perhaps you may set yourself down in the bay between two spreading beech-roots with a book on your lap, and be awakened all of a sudden by a friend: "I say, just keep where you are, will you? You make the jolliest motive." And you reply: "Well, I don't mind, if I may smoke." And thereafter the hours go idly by. Your friend at the easel labours doggedly a little way off, in the wide shadow of the

tree; and yet farther, across a strait of glaring sunshine, you see another painter, encamped in the shadow of another tree, and up to his waist in the fern. You cannot watch your own effigy growing out of the white trunk, and the trunk beginning to stand forth from the rest of the wood, and the whole picture getting dappled over with the flecks of sun that slip through the leaves overhead, and, as a wind goes by and sets the trees a-talking, flicker hither and thither like butterflies of light. But you know it is going forward; and, out of emulation with the painter, get ready your own palette, and lay out the colour for a woodland scene in words.

Your tree stands in a hollow paved with fern and heather, set in a basin of low hills, and scattered over with rocks and junipers. All the open is steeped in pitiless sunlight. Everything stands out as though it were cut in cardboard, every colour is strained into its highest key. The boulders are some of them upright and dead like monolithic castles, some of them prone like sleeping cattle. The junipers—looking, in their soiled and ragged mourning, like some funeral procession that has gone seeking the place of sepulchre three hundred years and more in wind and rain—are daubed in forcibly against the glowing ferns and heather. Every tassel of their rusty foliage is defined with pre-Raphaelite minuteness. And a sorry figure

Pre-Raphaelites. An association of artists founded in 1848 as a protest against the foolishness and slovenly carelessness of contemporary art. They proposed to go back to the methods in use in the days before Raphael (1483–1520). Their work was marked by a literal and truthful representation of nature.

they make out there in the sun, like misbegotten yew-trees! The scene is all pitched in a key of colour so peculiar, and lit up with such a discharge of violent sunlight, as a man might live fifty years in England and not see.

Meanwhile at your elbow some one tunes up a song, words of Ronsard to a pathetic tremulous air, of how the poet loved his mistress long ago, and pressed on her the flight of time, and told her how white and quiet the dead lay under the stones, and how the boat dipped and pitched as the shades embarked for the passionless land. Yet a little while, sang the poet, and there shall be no more love; only to sit and remember loves that might have been. There is a falling flourish in the air that remains in the memory and comes back in incongruous places, on the seat of hansoms or in the warm bed at night, with something of a forest savour.

"You can get up now," says the painter; "I'm at the background."

And so up you get, stretching yourself, and go your way into the wood, the daylight becoming richer and more golden, and the shadows stretching farther into the open. A cool air comes along the highways, and the scents awaken. The fir-trees breathe abroad their ozone. Out of unknown thickets comes forth the soft, secret, aromatic odour of the woods, not like

Ronsard (1524–85). The chief of a number of young French writers of the Renaissance era, who strove to improve the French language and poetry of their time. They were known as the Pléiade.

Incongruous. Unsuitable, not fitting.

a smell of the free heaven, but as though court ladies, who had known these paths in ages long gone by, still walked in the summer evenings, and shed from their brocades a breath of musk or bergamot upon the woodland winds. One side of the long avenues is still kindled with the sun, the other is plunged in transparent shadow. Over the trees the west begins to burn like a furnace; and the painters gather up their chattels, and go down, by avenue or footpath, to the plain.

A Pleasure-Party

As this excursion is a matter of some length, and, moreover, we go in force, we have set aside our usual vehicle, the pony-cart, and ordered a large wagonette from Lejosne's. It has been waiting for near an hour, while one went to pack a knapsack, and t'other hurried over his toilette and coffee; but now it is filled from end to end with merry folk in summer attire, the coachman cracks his whip, and amid much applause from round the inn door, off we rattle at a spanking trot. The way lies through the forest, up hill and down dale, and by beech and pine wood, in the cheerful morning sunshine. The English get down at all the ascents and walk on ahead for exercise; the French are mightily entertained at this, and keep coyly underneath the tilt. As we go we carry with us a pleasant noise of laughter and light speech, and some one will be always breaking out into a bar or

Tilt. Canvas covering of the wagonette.

two of opera bouffe. Before we get to the Route Ronde here comes Desprez, the colourman from Fontainebleau, trudging across on his weekly peddle with a case of merchandise; and it is "Desprez, leave me some malachite green"; "Desprez, leave me so much canvas"; "Desprez, leave me this, or leave me that"; M. Desprez standing the while in the sunlight with grave face and many salutations. The next interruption is more important. For some time back we have had the sound of cannon in our ears; and now, a little past Franchard, we find a mounted trooper holding a led horse, who brings the wagonette to a stand. The artillery is practising in the Quadrilateral, it appears; passage along the Route Ronde formally interdicted for the moment. There is nothing for it but to draw up at the glaring cross-roads, and get down to make fun with the notorious Cocardon, the most ungainly and ill-bred dog of all the ungainly and ill-bred dogs of Barbizon, or clamber about the sandy banks. And meanwhile the Doctor, with sun umbrella, wide Panama, and patriarchal beard, is busy wheedling and (for aught the rest of us know) bribing the too facile sentry. His speech is smooth and dulcet, his manner dignified and insinuating. It is not for nothing that the Doctor has voyaged all the world over, and speaks all languages from French to Patagonian. He has not come home from perilous journeys to be thwarted by a corporal of horse. And so we soon see the soldier's mouth relax, and his shoulders imitate a relenting heart.

Opera bouffe. Comic opera.

"*En voiture, Messieurs, Mesdames,*" sings the Doctor; and on we go again at a good round pace, for black care follows hard after us, and discretion prevails not a little over valour in some timorous spirits of the party. At any moment we may meet the sergeant, who will send us back. At any moment we may encounter a flying shell, which will send us somewhere farther off than Grez.

Grez—for that is our destination—has been highly recommended for its beauty. "*Il y a de l'eau,*" people have said with an emphasis, as if that settled the question, which, for a French mind, I am rather led to think it does. And Grez, when we get there, is indeed a place worthy of some praise. It lies out of the forest, a cluster of houses, with an old bridge, an old castle in ruin, and a quaint old church. The inn garden descends in terraces to the river; stable-yard, kailyard, orchard, and a space of lawn, fringed with rushes and embellished with a green arbour. On the opposite bank there is a reach of English-looking plain, set thickly with willows and poplars. And between the two lies the river, clear and deep, and full of reeds and floating lilies. Water-plants cluster about the starlings of the long low bridge, and stand half-way up upon the piers in green luxuri-

En voiture. Get into the carriage.

Grez. The favourite resort of Stevenson. He describes it as "a pretty and very melancholy village on the plain, pretty to see, merry to inhabit." The river (*il y a de l'eau*) added to its charm.

Kailyard. Scottish cabbage or kitchen garden.

Starlings. Piles protecting the piers of the bridge.

ance. They catch the dipped oar with long antennæ, and chequer the slimy bottom with the shadow of their leaves. And the river wanders hither and thither among the islets, and is smothered and broken up by the reeds, like an old building in the lithe, hardy arms of the climbing ivy. You may watch the box where the good man of the inn keeps fish alive for his kitchen, one oily ripple following another over the top of the yellow deal. And you can hear a splashing and a prattle of voices from the shed under the old kirk, where the village women wash and wash all day among the fish and water-lilies. It seems as if linen washed there should be specially cool and sweet.

We have come here for the river. And no sooner have we all bathed than we board the two shallops and push off gaily, and go gliding under the trees and gathering a great treasure of water-lilies. Some one sings; some trail their hands in the cool water; some lean over the gunwale to see the image of the tall poplars far below, and the shadow of the boat, with the balanced oars and their own head protruded, glide smoothly over the yellow floor of the stream. At last, the day declining—all silent and happy, and up to the knees in the wet lilies—we punt slowly back again to the landing-place beside the bridge. There is a wish for solitude on all. One hides himself in the arbour with a cigarette; another goes a walk in the country with Cocardon; a third inspects the church. And it is not till dinner is on the table, and the inn's best wine goes round from glass to glass, that we

begin to throw off the restraint and fuse once more into a jolly fellowship.

Half the party are to return to-night with the wagonette; and some of the others, loath to break up good company, will go with them a bit of the way and drink a stirrup-cup at Marlotte. It is dark in the wagonette, and not so merry as it might have been. The coachman loses the road. So-and-so tries to light fireworks with the most indifferent success. Some sing, but the rest are too weary to applaud; and it seems as if the festival were fairly at an end—

> "Nous avons fait la noce,
> Rentrons à nos foyers!"

And such is the burthen, even after we have come to Marlotte and taken our places in the court at Mother Antonine's. There is punch on the long table out in the open air, where the guests dine in summer weather. The candles flare in the night wind, and the faces round the punch are lit up, with shifting emphasis, against a background of complete and solid darkness. It is all picturesque enough; but the fact is, we are aweary. We yawn; we are out of the vein; we have made the wedding, as the song says, and now, for pleasure's sake, let's make an end on't. When here comes striding into the court, booted to mid-thigh, spurred and splashed, in a jacket of green cord, the great, famous, and redoubtable Blank; and in a moment the fire kindles again, and the night is witness

Nous avons, etc. We have completed the wedding, let us return home.

of our laughter as he imitates Spaniards, Germans, Englishmen, picture-dealers, all eccentric ways of speaking and thinking, with a possession, a fury, a strain of mind and voice, that would rather suggest a nervous crisis than a desire to please. We are as merry as ever when the trap sets forth again, and say farewell noisily to all the good folk going farther. Then, as we are far enough from thoughts of sleep, we visit Blank in his quaint house, and sit an hour or so in a great tapestried chamber, laid with furs, littered with sleeping hounds, and lit up, in fantastic shadow and shine, by a wood fire in a mediæval chimney. And then we plod back through the darkness to the inn beside the river.

How quick bright things come to confusion! When we arise next morning, the grey showers fall steadily, the trees hang limp, and the face of the stream is spoiled with dimpling raindrops. Yesterday's lilies encumber the garden walk, or begin, dismally enough, their voyage towards the Seine and the salt sea. A sickly shimmer lies upon the dripping house-roofs, and all the colour is washed out of the green and golden landscape of last night, as though an envious man had taken a water-colour sketch and blotted it together with a sponge. We go out a-walking in the wet roads. But the roads about Grez have a trick of their own. They go on for a while among clumps of willows and patches of vine, and then, suddenly and without any warning, cease and determine in some miry hollow or upon some bald knowe; and you have a short period of hope, then right-about face, and

back the way you came! So we draw about the kitchen fire and play a round game of cards for ha'pence, or go to the billiard-room for a match at corks; and by one consent a messenger is sent over for the wagonette—Grez shall be left to-morrow.

To-morrow dawns so fair that two of the party agree to walk back for exercise, and let their knapsacks follow by the trap. I need hardly say they are neither of them French; for, of all English phrases, the phrase " for exercise " is the least comprehensible across the Straits of Dover. All goes well for a while with the pedestrians. The wet woods are full of scents in the noontide. At a certain cross, where there is a guardhouse, they make a halt, for the forester's wife is the daughter of their good host at Barbizon. And so there they are hospitably received by the comely woman, with one child in her arms and another prattling and tottering at her gown, and drink some syrup of quince in the back parlour, with a map of the forest on the wall, and some prints of love-affairs and the great Napoleon hunting. As they draw near the Quadrilateral, and hear once more the report of the big guns, they take a by-road to avoid the sentries, and go on a while somewhat vaguely, with the sound of the cannon in their ears and the rain beginning to fall. The ways grow wider and sandier; here and there there are real sand-hills, as though by the seashore; the firwood is open and grows in clumps upon the hillocks, and the race of sign-posts is no more.

Match at corks. A game at billiards in which corks are employed as well as billiard balls.

One begins to look at the other doubtfully. "I am sure we should keep more to the right," says one; and the other is just as certain they should hold to the left. And now, suddenly, the heavens open, and the rain falls "sheer and strong and loud," as out of a shower-bath. In a moment they are as wet as ship-wrecked sailors. They cannot see out of their eyes for the drift, and the water churns and gurgles in their boots. They leave the track and try across country with a gambler's desperation, for it seems as if it were impossible to make the situation worse; and, for the next hour, go scrambling from boulder to boulder, or plod along paths that are now no more than rivulets, and across waste clearings where the scattered shells and broken fir-trees tell all too plainly of the cannon in the distance. And meantime the cannon grumble out responses to the grumbling thunder. There is such a mixture of melodrama and sheer discomfort about all this, it is at once so grey and so lurid, that it is far more agreeable to read and write about by the chimney-corner than to suffer in the person. At last they chance on the right path, and make Franchard in the early evening, the sorriest pair of wanderers that ever welcomed English ale. Thence, by the Bois d'Hyver, the Ventes-Alexandre, and the Pins Brulés, to the clean hostelry, dry clothes, and dinner.

The Woods in Spring

I think you will like the forest best in the sharp early springtime, when it is just beginning to re-

awaken, and innumerable violets peep from among the fallen leaves; when two or three people at most sit down to dinner, and, at table, you will do well to keep a rug about your knees, for the nights are chill, and the salle-à-manger opens on the court. There is less to distract the attention, for one thing, and the forest is more itself. It is not bedotted with artists' sun-shades as with unknown mushrooms, nor bestrewn with the remains of English picnics. The hunting still goes on, and at any moment your heart may be brought into your mouth as you hear far-away horns; or you may be told by an agitated peasant that the Vicomte has gone up the avenue, not ten minutes since, "*à fond de train, monsieur, et avec douze piqueurs.*"

If you go up to some coign of vantage in the system of low hills that permeates the forest, you will see many different tracts of country, each of its own cold and melancholy neutral tint, and all mixed together and mingled the one into the other at the seams. You will see tracts of leafless beeches of a faint yellowish grey, and leafless oaks a little ruddier in the hue. Then zones of pines of a solemn green; and, dotted among the pines, or standing by themselves in rocky clearings, the delicate, snow-white trunks of birches, spreading out into snow-white branches yet more delicate, and crowned and canopied with a purple haze of twigs. And then a long, bare ridge of tumbled boulders, with bright sand-breaks between them, and wavering sandy roads among the bracken and

A fond de train, etc. At full speed, sir, and with a dozen huntsmen.

brown heather. It is all rather cold and unhomely. It has not the perfect beauty, nor the gem-like colouring, of the wood in the later year, when it is no more than one vast colonnade of verdant shadow, tremulous with insects, intersected here and there by lanes of sunlight set in purple heather. The loveliness of the woods in March is not, assuredly, of this blowzy rustic type. It is made sharp with a grain of salt, with a touch of ugliness. It has a sting like the sting of bitter ale; you acquire the love of it as men acquire a taste for olives. And the wonderful clear, pure air wells into your lungs the while by voluptuous inhalations, and makes the eyes bright, and sets the heart tinkling to a new tune—or, rather, to an old tune; for you remember in your boyhood something akin to this spirit of adventure, this thirst for exploration, that now takes you masterfully by the hand, plunges you into many a deep grove, and drags you over many a stony crest. It is as if the whole wood were full of friendly voices calling you farther in, and you turn from one side to another, like Buridan's donkey, in a maze of pleasure.

Comely beeches send up their white, straight, clustered branches, barred with green moss, like so many fingers from a half-clenched hand. Mighty oaks stand to the ankles in a fine tracery of under-

Buridan's donkey. Jean Buridan was a famous French Schoolman of the 14th century to whom the following saying is attributed:—"If a hungry donkey is placed exactly between two bundles of hay of equal size and attractiveness, it must starve, as there is nothing to determine the will of the animal towards either bundle."

wood; thence the tall shaft climbs upwards, and the great forest of stalwart boughs spreads out into the golden evening sky, where the rooks are flying and calling. On the sward of the Bois d'Hyver the firs stand well asunder with outspread arms, like fencers saluting; and the air smells of resin all around, and the sound of the axe is rarely still. But strangest of all, and in appearance oldest of all, are the dim and wizard upland districts of young wood. The ground is carpeted with fir-tassel, and strewn with fir-apples and flakes of fallen bark. Rocks lie crouching in the thicket, guttered with rain, tufted with lichen, white with years and the rigours of the changeful seasons. Brown and yellow butterflies are sown and carried away again by the light air—like thistledown. The loneliness of these coverts is so excessive, that there are moments when pleasure draws to the verge of fear. You listen and listen for some noise to break the silence, till you grow half mesmerised by the intensity of the strain; your sense of your own identity is troubled; your brain reels, like that of some gymnosophist poring on his own nose in Asiatic jungles; and should you see your own outspread feet, you see them, not as anything of yours, but as a feature of the scene around you.

Still the forest is always, but the stillness is not always unbroken. You can hear the wind pass in the distance over the tree-tops; sometimes briefly, like

Gymnosophist. The gymnosophists were a sect of ancient Hindu philosophers who renounced all worldly pleasures, and spent their time in the contemplation of nature.

the noise of a train; sometimes with a long, steady rush, like the breaking of waves. And sometimes, close at hand, the branches move, a moan goes through the thicket, and the wood thrills to its heart. Perhaps you may hear a carriage on the road to Fontainebleau, a bird gives a dry continual chirp, the dead leaves rustle underfoot, or you may time your steps to the steady recurrent strokes of the woodman's axe. From time to time, over the low grounds, a flight of rooks goes by; and from time to time the cooing of wild doves falls upon the ear, not sweet and rich and near at hand as in England, but a sort of voice of the woods, thin and far away, as fits these solemn places. Or you hear suddenly the hollow, eager, violent barking of dogs; scared deer flit past you through the fringes of the wood; then a man or two running, in green blouse, with gun and game-bag on a bandolier; and then, out of the thick of the trees, comes the jar of rifle shots. Or perhaps the hounds are out, and horns are blown, and scarlet-coated huntsmen flash through the clearings, and the solid noise of horses galloping passes below you, where you sit perched among the rocks and heather. The boar is afoot, and all over the forest, and in all neighbouring villages, there is a vague excitement and a vague hope; for who knows whither the chase may lead? and even to have seen a single piqueur, or spoken to a single sportsman, is to be a man of consequence for the night.

Besides men who shoot and men who ride with the hounds, there are few people in the forest, in the early

spring, save the woodcutters plying their axes steadily, and old women and children gathering wood for the fire. You may meet such a party coming home in the twilight; the old woman laden with a fagot of chips, and the little ones hauling a long branch behind them in her wake. That is the worst of what there is to encounter; and if I tell you of what once happened to a friend of mine, it is by no means to tantalise you with false hopes; for the adventure was unique. It was on a very cold, still, sunless morning, with a flat grey sky and a frosty tingle in the air, that this friend (who shall here be nameless) heard the notes of a key-bugle played with much hesitation, and saw the smoke of a fire spread out along the green pine-tops, in a remote uncanny glen, hard by a hill of naked boulders. He drew near warily, and beheld a picnic party seated under a tree in an open. The old father knitted a sock, the mother sat staring at the fire. The eldest son, in the uniform of a private of dragoons, was choosing out notes on a key-bugle. Two or three daughters lay in the neighbourhood picking violets. And the whole party as grave and silent as the woods around them! My friend watched for a long time, he says; but all held their peace; not one spoke or smiled; only the dragoon kept choosing out single notes upon the bugle, and the father knitted away at his work and made strange movements the while with his flexible eyebrows. They took no notice whatever of my friend's presence, which was disquieting in itself, and increased the resemblance of the whole party to mechanical waxworks. Certainly, he affirms, a wax

figure might have played the bugle with more spirit than that strange dragoon. And as this hypothesis of his became more certain, the awful insolubility of why they should be left out there in the woods with nobody to wind them up again when they ran down, and a growing disquietude as to what might happen next, became too much for his courage, and he turned tail, and fairly took to his heels. It might have been a singing in his ears, but he fancies he was followed as he ran by a peal of Titanic laughter. Nothing has ever transpired to clear up the mystery; it may be they were automata; or it may be (and this is the theory to which I lean myself) that this is all another chapter of Heine's "Gods in Exile"; that the upright old man with the eyebrows was no other than Father Jove, and the young dragoon with the taste for music either Apollo or Mars.

Morality

Strange indeed is the attraction of the forest for the minds of men. Not one or two only, but a great chorus of grateful voices have arisen to spread abroad its fame. Half the famous writers of modern France have had their word to say about Fontainebleau.

Titanic. Huge, great, pertaining to the Titans, the giants of classical mythology.

Heine (1797–1856). One of the most important German writers of the first half of the nineteenth century, in prose and in verse. One of his works is *Die Götter im Exil* (The Gods in Exile).

Chateaubriand, Michelet, Béranger, Georges Sand, de Senancour, Flaubert, Mürger, the brothers Goncourt, Théodore de Banville, each of these has done something to the eternal praise and memory of these woods. Even at the very worst of times, even when the picturesque was anathema in the eyes of all Persons of Taste, the forest still preserved a certain reputation for beauty. It was in 1730 that the Abbé Guilbert published his *Historical Description of the Palace, Town, and Forest of Fontainebleau.* And very droll it is to see him, as he tries to set forth his admiration in terms of what was then permissible. The monstrous rocks, etc., says the Abbé, "sont admirées avec surprise des voyageurs qui s'écrient aussitôt avec Horace: Ut mihi devio ripas et vacuum nemus mirari libet." The good man is not exactly lyrical in his praise; and you see how he sets his back against Horace as against a trusty oak. Horace, at any rate, was classical. For the rest, however, the Abbé likes places where many alleys meet; or which, like the Belle-Étoile, are kept up "by a special gardener," and admires at the Table du Roi the labours of the Grand Master of Woods and Waters,

Anathema. The curse which accompanied excommunication by priests of the Church. Hence anything to be shunned completely.

Sont admirées, etc. Are admired with surprise by travellers who exclaim like Horace, "It is a joy to me, while roaming, to admire the river banks and solitary grove." See Horace, *Odes*, III. xxv.

Belle-Étoile. A famous spot in the forest where eight roads crossed. It was built by the Sieur de la Falure, and the approaches were carefully cultivated and attended to.

the Sieur de la Falure, " qui a fait faire ce magnifique endroit."

But indeed, it is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of the air, that emanation from the old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit. Disappointed men, sick Francis Firsts and vanquished Grand Monarchs, time out of mind have come here for consolation. Hither perplexed folk have retired out of the press of life, as into a deep bay-window on some night of masquerade, and here found quiet and silence, and rest, the mother of wisdom. It is the great moral spa; this forest without a fountain is itself the great fountain of Juventus. It is the best place in the world to bring an old sorrow that has been a long while your friend and enemy; and if, like Béranger's, your gaiety has run away from home and left open the door for sorrow to come in, of all covers in Europe, it is here you may expect to find the truant hid. With every hour you change. The air penetrates through your clothes, and nestles to your living body. You love exercise and slumber, long fasting and full meals. You forget all your scruples and live a while in peace and freedom,

Qui a fait faire, etc. Who has had this splendid place made.

Francis I. King of France, 1515–47.

Grand Monarchs. This title was applied especially to Louis XIV. (1643–1715).

Fountain of Juventus. The idea of a fountain by bathing in which one could lose one's sorrows and renew one's youth has been popular in the mythologies of many peoples.

Béranger (1780–1857). The greatest of French song-writers; a great admirer of Napoleon, whose praises he sang.

and for the moment only. For here, all is absent that can stimulate to moral feeling. Such people as you see may be old, or toil-worn, or sorry; but you see them framed in the forest, like figures on a painted canvas; and for you, they are not people in any living and kindly sense. You forget the grim contrariety of interests. You forget the narrow lane where all men jostle together in unchivalrous contention, and the kennel, deep and unclean, that gapes on either hand for the defeated. Life is simple enough, it seems, and the very idea of sacrifice becomes like a mad fancy out of a last night's dream.

Your ideal is not perhaps high, but it is plain and possible. You become enamoured of a life of change and movement and the open air, where the muscles shall be more exercised than the affections. When you have had your will of the forest, you may visit the whole round world. You may buckle on your knapsack and take the road on foot. You may bestride a good nag, and ride forth, with a pair of saddlebags, into the enchanted East. You may cross the Black Forest, and see Germany wide-spread before you, like a map, dotted with old cities, walled and spired, that dream all day on their own reflections in the Rhine or Danube. You may pass the spinal cord of Europe and go down from Alpine glaciers to where Italy extends her marble moles and glasses her marble palaces in the midland sea. You may sleep

Kennel. Gutter.
Mole. Jetty partly enclosing a harbour.
Midland sea. The Mediterranean.

in flying trains or wayside taverns. You may be awakened at dawn by the scream of the express or the small pipe of the robin in the hedge. For you the rain should allay the dust of the beaten road; the wind dry your clothes upon you as you walked. Autumn should hang out russet pears and purple grapes along the lane; inn after inn proffer you their cups of raw wine; river by river receive your body in the sultry noon. Wherever you went warm valleys and high trees and pleasant villages should compass you about; and light fellowships should take you by the arm, and walk with you an hour upon your way.

You may see from afar off what it will come to in the end—the weather-beaten, red-nosed vagabond, consumed by a fever of the feet, cut off from all near touch of human sympathy, a waif, an Ishmael, and an outcast. And yet it will seem well—and yet, in the air of the forest, this will seem the best—to break all the network bound about your feet by birth and old companionship and loyal love, and bear your shovelful of phosphates to and fro, in town and country, until the hour of the great dissolvent.

Or, perhaps, you will keep to the cover. For the forest is by itself, and forest life owns small kinship with life in the dismal land of labour. Men are so far sophisticated that they cannot take the world as

Ishmael. Son of Abram and Hagar, of whom it was prophesied " his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him " (Gen. xvi. 12).

Shovelful of phosphates. The body.

Great dissolvent. Death.

it is given to them by the sight of their eyes. Not only what they see and hear, but what they know to be behind, enter into their notion of a place. If the sea, for instance, lie just across the hills, sea-thoughts will come to them at intervals, and the tenor of their dreams from time to time will suffer a sea-change.

And so here, in this forest, a knowledge of its greatness is for much in the effect produced. You reckon up the miles that lie between you and intrusion. You may walk before you all day long, and not fear to touch the barrier of your Eden, or stumble out of fairyland into the land of gin and steam-hammers. And there is an old tale enhances for the imagination the grandeur of the woods of France, and secures you in the thought of your seclusion. When Charles VI. hunted in the time of his wild boyhood near Senlis, there was captured an old stag, having a collar of bronze about his neck, and these words engraved on the collar: "Cæsar mihi hoc donavit." It is no wonder if the minds of men were moved at this occurrence and they stood aghast to find themselves thus touching hands with forgotten ages, and following an antiquity with hound and horn. And even for you, it is scarcely in an idle curiosity that you ponder how many centuries this stag had carried its free antlers through the wood, and how many summers and winters had shone and snowed on the imperial badge. If the extent of solemn wood could thus safeguard a tall stag from the hunter's hounds and horses, might

Suffer a sea-change. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I. ii. 400.
Cæsar mihi hoc donavit. Cæsar gave me this.

not you also play hide-and-seek, in these groves, with all the pangs and trepidations of man's life, and elude Death, the mighty hunter, for more than the span of human years? Here, also, crash his arrows; here, in the farthest glade, sounds the gallop of the pale horse. But he does not hunt this cover with all his hounds, for the game is thin and small: and if you were but alert and wary, if you lodged ever in the deepest thickets, you too might live on into later generations and astonish men by your stalwart age and the trophies of an immemorial success.

For the forest takes away from you all excuse to die. There is nothing here to cabin or thwart your free desires. Here all the impudencies of the brawling world reach you no more. You may count your hours, like Endymion, by the strokes of the lone wood-cutter, or by the progression of the lights and shadows and the sun wheeling his wide circuit through the naked heavens. Here shall you see no enemies but winter and rough weather. And if a pang comes to you at all, it will be a pang of healthful hunger. All the puling sorrows, all the carking repentance, all this talk of duty that is no duty, in the great peace, in the pure daylight of these woods, fall away from you like a garment. And if perchance you come forth upon an eminence, where the wind blows upon you large and fresh, and the pines knock their long stems to-

Endymion. A young shepherd of surpassing beauty, who so moved the cold heart of Diana that she kept him in perpetual sleep on Mt. Latmos, in order that she might be able to kiss him at her pleasure.

No enemies, etc. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II. v. 7–8.

gether, like an ungainly sort of puppets, and see far away over the plain a factory chimney defined against the pale horizon—it is for you, as for the staid and simple peasant when, with his plough, he upturns old arms and harness from the furrow of the glebe. Ay, sure enough, there was a battle there in the old times; and, sure enough, there is a world out yonder where men strive together with a noise of oaths and weeping and clamorous dispute. So much you apprehend by an athletic act of the imagination. A faint far-off rumour as of Merovingian wars; a legend as of some dead religion.

Merovingian. The Merovingian kings were the earliest dynasty of Frankish kings. They ruled from the fifth to the eighth centuries in Northern France and surrounding country.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

TENNYSON.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

"The fields his study, nature was his book."

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer incumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

"———a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet."

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to

On Going a Journey. This is one of the best known of Hazlitt's Essays. It is to be found in his *Table Talk*, a collection of essays from the *London Magazine*, published in 1821.

The fields, etc. Bloomfield, *Farmer's Boy, Spring*, line 32.

A friend in my retreat, etc. Cowper, *Retirement*, lines 741–42.

think, feel, do just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

> "May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,"

that I absent myself from the town for awhile, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner —and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wrack and sumless treasuries," burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of

Contemplation, etc. Milton, *Comus*, lines 378–380.
Tilbury. A light two-wheeled open vehicle, probably so named from its inventor.

the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!" I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff of the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our

Leave, oh, leave, etc. In Gray's *Descent of Odin*, the line

"Leave me, leave me, to repose"

occurs several times.

Very stuff of the conscience. Othello, I. ii. 3.

meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne, "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said: but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature, without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for the synthetical method on a journey, in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a beanfield crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-

Sterne (1713–68). One of the creators of the English novel of the eighteenth century. Author of *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, and *A Sentimental Journey*.

sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company, seems extravagance or affectation; and on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must "give it an understanding, but no tongue." My old friend C——, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale, a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode.

Give it an understanding, etc. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I. ii. 250.

C——. Coleridge.

A didactic poem is one which is intended to teach something; a *Pindaric ode* (so-called) is one written in an irregular metre.

"He talked far above singing." If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden. They had "that fine madness in them which our first poets had"; and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following:

"——Here be woods as green
As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
Face of the curled stream, with flow'rs as many
As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
Arbours o'ergrown with woodbine, caves and dells;
Choose where thou wilt, while I sit by and sing.
Or gather rushes to make many a ring
For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest."—— FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS

Far above singing. Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, V. v., 167.

All-Foxden. An old family mansion, near Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, where Coleridge and Hazlitt visited Wordsworth. See Hazlitt's Essay: *My First Acquaintance with Poets.*

That fine madness. See Drayton's *Of Poets and Poesy.* He is writing of Marlowe:—

"That fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

The whole passage is well worth reading.

Faithful Shepherdess. I. iii. 27–44. The author is John Fletcher (1576–1625). For *Endymion*, etc., see page 62.

Had I words and images at command like these, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot:—I must have time to collect myself.—

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. L—— is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of night-fall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to "take one's ease at one's inn!" These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to

L——. Charles Lamb.

Take one's ease, etc. Shakespeare, *I. Henry IV.*, III. iii. 93.

talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

"The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,"

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet! Sancho in such a situation once fixed upon cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen—*Procul, O procul este profani!* These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. I associate nothing with my travelling companion

The cups that cheer, etc. Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 39–40.

Sancho. Don Quixote's famous squire, who on this occasion was compelled to accept cowheels because the landlord could offer nothing else. See Jarvis's translation, chap. cxi.

Shandean contemplation. Contemplations such as those of Sterne and his characters in *Tristram Shandy*. For Sterne see note on p. 18.

Procul, O procul, etc. Æneid, VI. 258. "Far hence be souls profane."

Quaker, etc. Because either of these would be silent.

but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world: but your "unhoused free condition is put into circumscription and confine." The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges —"lord of one's-self, uncumber'd with a name." Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice

Unhoused free condition, etc. Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. ii. 26–27.

Lord of one's-self, etc. An adaptation of line 18 of Dryden's *To my Honoured Kinsman, John Driden:*

"Lord of yourself, uncumbered with a wife."

and disappoint conjecture; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed commonplaces that we appear in the world: an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns —sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham-common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's, (I think it was) where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in the boat between me and the twilight—at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read Paul and Virginia, which I picked up at an inn

Gribelin's engravings, etc. A very popular set of plates of the famous Cartoons of Raphael (1483–1520). Seven of these Cartoons, designed originally for tapestry for the Vatican, are in South Kensington Museum.

Westall (1765–1836). A popular artist and illustrator of books, including the English poets from Shakespeare to Scott.

Paul and Virginia. A charming story in the fourth volume of *Les Études de la Nature* of Bernardin de St. Pierre (1737–1814), a French author who travelled in the East.

at Bridgwater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's Camilla. It was on the tenth of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the New Eloise, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birth-day, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point, you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with "green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks" below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time "glittered green with sunny showers," and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender

Bridgwater. In his Essay, *My First Acquaintance with Poets*, Hazlitt says Tewkesbury, and this was probably the place.

Madame D'Arblay. Better known as Fanny Burney (1752–1840). *Camilla* was published in 1796, and was the third of four novels, which made the authoress deservedly popular.

New Eloise. The *Nouvelle Heloise* of Rousseau (1712–78), the French philosopher. This novel, written in the form of letters, exercised a great influence on the development of the novel of sentiment in the 18th century.

Bon bouche. Tit-bit. Should be *bonne bouche.*

Green upland swells, etc. Coleridge, *Ode on the Departing Year*, stanza vii.

Glittered green, etc. As above.

branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospects, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems. But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

"The beautiful is vanished, and returns not."

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced! I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

Faded into the light, etc. Wordsworth, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, line 76.

The beautiful is vanished. Coleridge, *Death of Wallenstein*, V. i. 68.

Drink of the waters, etc. Revelation xxi. 17 and xxii. 1.

There is hardly any thing that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight, also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country, I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. "Beyond Hyde Park," says Sir Fopling Flutter, "all is a desert." All that part of the map that we do no see before us is a blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nut-shell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space

Sir Fopling Flutter. A character in Etheredge's *Man of Mode*, first acted in 1675.

than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true significance of that immense mass of territory and population, known by the name of China to us? An inch of paste-board on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our own being only piece-meal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid, the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names, that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!—To return to the question I have quitted above.

I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but

China orange. So called because the first oranges were imported from China.

rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place"; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

"With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd"—

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures.—As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a

The mind is its own place. Paradise Lost, I. 254.

With glistering spires. Paradise Lost, III. 550.

Bodleian. The famous library of the University of Oxford, restored and enlarged by Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613).

Blenheim. The residence of the Marlborough family at Woodstock near Oxford.

foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any simple contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support.—Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over " the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open for me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory,

freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else: but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must " jump " all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful and in one sense instructive; but it appears to be cut off our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of

Bourbons. Kings of France. Hazlitt visited France in 1802. He was a great admirer of Napoleon and the French Revolution, as this passage shows. He thought that glory, freedom, etc., had gone with the restoration of the Bourbons to their " arbitrary throne."

Dr. Johnson (1709–84). Essayist, critic and lexicographer, but best known as a talker of exceptional merit, whose conversations were faithfully recorded by Boswell in his masterpiece of biography, the *Life of Johnson.* In chap. xli., 1778, during a conversation on travelling we find Johnson remarking: " How little does travelling supply to the conversation of any man who has travelled? "

our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,

"Out of my country and myself I go."

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them: but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could any where borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

Suggestions for further reading on the subject of Walking will be found on page 21.

JOHN RUSKIN

I. To myself, mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery; in them, and in the forms of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up; and though I can look with happy admiration at the lowland flowers, and woods, and open skies, the happiness is tranquil and cold, like that of examining detached flowers in a conservatory, or reading a pleasant book; and if the scenery be resolutely level, insisting upon the declaration of its own flatness in all the detail of it, as in Holland, or Lincolnshire, or Central Lombardy, it appears to me like a prison, and I cannot long endure it. But the slightest rise and fall in the road,—a mossy bank at the side of a crag of chalk, with brambles at its brow, overhanging it,—a ripple over three or four stones in the stream by the bridge,—above all, a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if, possibly, one might see a hill if one got to the other side of the trees, will instantly give me intense delight, because the shadow, or the hope, of the hills is in them.

II. And thus, although there are few districts of

The Mountain Glory. From Ruskin's *Modern Painters* Part V. "Of Mountain Beauty." First published 1856.

Northern Europe, however apparently dull or tame, in which I cannot find pleasure, though the whole of Northern France (except Champagne), dull as it seems to most travellers, is to me a perpetual Paradise; and, putting Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and one or two such other perfectly flat districts aside, there is not an English county which I should not find entertainment in exploring the cross-roads of, foot by foot; yet all my best enjoyment would be owing to the imagination of the hills, colouring, with their far-away memories, every lowland stone and herb. The pleasant French coteau, green in the sunshine, delights me, either by what real mountain character it has in itself (for in extent and succession of promontory the flanks of the French valleys have quite the sublimity of true mountain distances), or by its broken ground and rugged steps among the vines, and rise of the leafage above, against the blue sky, as it might rise at Vevay or Como. There is not a wave of the Seine but is associated in my mind with the first rise of the sandstones and forest pines of Fontainebleau; and with the hope of the Alps, as one leaves Paris with the horses' heads to the south-west, the morning sun flashing on the bright waves at Charenton. If there be *no* hope or association of this kind, and if I cannot deceive myself into fancying that perhaps at the next rise of the road there may be seen the film of a blue hill in the gleam of sky at the horizon, the landscape, however beautiful, produces in me even a kind of sickness and pain; and the whole view from Richmond Hill or Windsor Terrace,—nay,

the gardens of Alcinous, with their perpetual summer —or of the Hesperides (if they were flat, and not close to Atlas), golden apples and all,—I would give away in an instant, for one mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady-fern.

III. I know that this is in great part idiosyncrasy; and that I must not trust to my own feelings, in this respect, as representative of the modern landscape instinct; yet I know it is not idiosyncrasy, in so far as there may be proved to be indeed an increase of the absolute beauty of all scenery in exact proportion to its mountainous character, providing that character be *healthily* mountainous. I do not mean to take the Col de Bon Homme as representative of hills, any more than I would take Romney Marsh as representative of plains; but putting Leicestershire or Staffordshire fairly beside Westmoreland, and Lombardy or Champagne fairly beside the Pays de Vaud or the Canton Berne, I find the increase in the calculable sum of elements of beauty to be steadily in proportion to the increase of mountainous character; and that the best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and corn-

Gardens of Alcinous. The wonderful gardens attached to the palace of Alcinous, king of the Phæacians, who was visited by Odysseus during his wanderings. See Homer, *Odyssey*, VII., lines 112 ff., or Butcher and Lang's translation, pp. 106 and 107.

Hesperides. In Greek mythology a garden containing golden apples guarded by a dragon. Atlas visited the garden to obtain these apples for Hercules.

Romney Marsh. In Kent.

Pays de Vaud and *Berne* are Swiss cantons.

fields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above; this excellence not being in any wise a matter referable to feeling, or individual preferences, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colours on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment.

IV. For consider, first, the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape colour by the introductions of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In an ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky; the green of grass, which I will suppose (and this is an unnecessary concession to the lowlands) entirely fresh and bright; the green of trees; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in *addition* to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances; and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness; these azures and purples passing into rose-colour of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose-

colour of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in colour means at all; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the far-away hill-purples he cannot conceive.

v. Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of colour, we have to estimate the influence of the finished inlaying and enamel-work of the colour-jewellery on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower; most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones. The wood hyacinth and wild rose are, indeed, the only *supreme* flowers that the lowlands can generally show; and the wild rose is also a mountaineer, and more fragrant in the hills, while the wood hyacinth, or grape hyacinth, at its best cannot match even the dark bell-gentian, leaving the light-blue star-gentian in its uncontested queenliness, and the Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude. The violet, lily of the valley, crocus, and wood anemone are, I suppose, claimable partly by the plains as well as the hills; but the large orange lily and narcissus I have never seen but on hill pastures, and the exquisite oxalis is pre-eminently a mountaineer.

vi. To this supremacy in mosses and flowers we

Oxalis. Wood sorrel. Of this flower Ruskin writes that the Savoyards call it "Pain du Bon Dieu," from the resemblance of its white and scattered blossoms to the manna of the wilderness.

have next to add an inestimable gain in the continual presence and power of water. Neither in its clearness, its colour, its fantasy of motion, its calmness of space, depth, and reflection, or its wrath, can water be conceived by a lowlander, out of sight of sea. A sea wave is far grander than any torrent—but of the sea and its influences we are not now speaking; and the sea itself, though it *can* be clear, is never calm, among our shores, in the sense that a mountain lake can be calm. The sea seems only to pause; the mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the clouds of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning,—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance.

Ruskin also has a chapter in *Modern Painters* on "The Mountain Gloom." See also the excellent essay, "The Alps in Winter," in L. Stephen's *Playground of Europe*.

Noon descends around me now:
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvéd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curvéd horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-wingéd feet
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandall'd Apennine.

SHELLEY.

FRANCIS BACON

GOD ALMIGHTY first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which, buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks: and a man shall ever see that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year; in which, severally, things of beauty may then be in season. For December and January and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly; ivy; bays; juniper; cypress-trees; yew; pine-apple-trees; fir-trees; rosemary; lavender; periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue; germander; flags; orange-trees, lemon-trees, and myrtles, if they be stoved; and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree,

Of Gardens. One of the collection of Essays of Francis, Lord Bacon. It first appeared in the edition of 1625.
Grow to civility, etc. Reach high stage of civilisation.
Royal ordering. Construction on the grand scale.
Pine-apple-trees. Pine trees.

which then blossoms; crocus vernus, both the yellow and the gray; primroses; anemones; the early tulippa; hyacinthus orientalis; chamaïris; fritillaria. For March, there come violets, specially the single blue, which are the earliest; the yellow daffadil; the daisy; the almond-tree in blossom; the peach-tree in blossom; the cornelian-tree in blossom; sweet briar. In April follow, the double white violet; the wall-flower; the stock-gillyflower; the cowslip; flower-delices, and lilies of all natures; rosemary flowers; the tulippa; the double piony; the pale daffadil; the French honeysuckle; the cherry-tree in blossom; the dammasin and plum-trees in blossom; the white-thorn in leaf; the lilac-tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, specially the blush pink; roses of all kinds, except the musk, which comes later; honey-suckles; strawberries; bugloss; columbine; the French marygold; flos Africanus; cherry-tree in fruit; ribes; figs in fruit; rasps; vine flowers; lavender in flower; the sweet satyrian, with the white flower; herba muscaria; lilium convallium; the apple-tree in blossom. In July come gillyflowers

Crocus vernus. Spring crocus.
Chamaïris. The iris.
Cornelian-tree. Cornel cherry, formerly cultivated for the sake of its fruit.
Stock-gillyflower. The stock.
Flower-delice is a corruption of the French *fleur-de-lis.*
Dammasin. Damson.
Flos Africanus. The African marigold (mary-gold).
Ribes. Currants. *Rasps.* Raspberries.
Satyrian. A plant of the orchid family.
Herba muscaria. Musk plant.
Lilium convallium. Lily of the valley.

of all varieties; musk-roses; the lime-tree in blossom; early pears and plums in fruit; ginitings; quadlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit; pears; apricocks; berberries; filberds; musk-melons; monks-hoods, of all colours. In September come grapes; apples; poppies of all colours; peaches; melocotones; nectarines; cornelians; wardens; quinces. In October and the beginning of November come services; medlars, bullises; roses cut or removed to come late; hollyokes; and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived, that you may have *ver perpetuum*, as the place affords.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes, like the warbling of music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a morning's dew. Bays likewise yield no smell as they grow. Rosemary little; nor sweet marjoram. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air, is the violet; specially the white double

Ginitings. A form of early apple.
Quadlins. Codling apples.
Apricocks. Apricots. *Berberries.* Barberries.
Filberds. The nuts of the filbert or hazel tree.
Melocotones. Quinces or peaches.
Wardens. Pears with good keeping qualities.
Services. The service tree.
Bullises. Bullaces, small plums.
Ver perpetuum. Perpetual spring.

violet, which comes twice a year; about the middle of April, and about Bartholomewtide. Next to that is the musk-rose. Then the strawberry-leaves dying, which [yield] a most excellent cordial smell. Then the flower of the vines; it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth. Then sweet-briar. Then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlour or lower chamber window. Then pinks and gillyflowers, specially the matted pink and clove gillyflower. Then the flowers of the lime-tree. Then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of bean flowers I speak not, because they are field flowers. But those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, being but trodden upon and crushed, are three: that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints. Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens (speaking of those which are indeed prince-like, as we have done of buildings), the contents ought not to be well under thirty acres of ground, and to be divided into three parts: a green in the entrance; a heath or desert in the going forth; and the main garden in the midst; besides alleys on both sides. And I like well that four acres of ground be assigned to the green; six to the heath; four and four

Bartholomewtide. August 24th.

Clove gillyflower is the carnation as distinguished from the stock gillyflower of a preceding page.

For. As regards; in respect of.

Going forth. The exit as opposed to the entrance with its green or lawn.

to either side; and twelve to the main garden. The green hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden. But because the alley will be long, and, in great heat of the year or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden by going in the sun thorough the green, therefore you are, of either side the green, to plant a covert alley, upon carpenter's work, about twelve foot in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. As for the making of knots or figures with divers-coloured earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house on that side which the garden stands, they be but toys: you may see as good sights many times in tarts. The garden is best to be square; encompassed, on all the four sides, with a stately arched hedge. The arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten foot high and six foot broad; and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire hedge, of some four foot high, framed also upon carpenter's work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch, a little turret, with a belly, enough to

Buy the shade. Obtain the shade at the expense of walking in the sun across the lawn.
Covert alley. Covered path.
Carpenter's work. A wooden fence or trellis.
Knots. Shaped beds.
Toys. Trifles.
Belly. Rounded projection.

receive a cage of birds; and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round coloured glass, gilt for the sun to play upon. But this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently slope, some six foot, set all with flowers. Also I understand that this square of the garden should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave, on either side, ground enough for diversity of side alleys; unto which the two covert alleys of the green may deliver you. But there must be no alleys with hedges at either end of this great enclosure: not at the hither end, for letting your prospect upon this fair hedge from the green; nor at the further end, for letting your prospect from the hedge, through the arches, upon the heath.

For the ordering of the ground within the great hedge, I leave it to variety of device; advising, nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into, first, it be not too busy or full of work. Wherein I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff: they be for children. Little low hedges, round, like welts, with some pretty pyramides, I like well; and in some places, fair columns upon frames of carpenter's work. I would also have the alleys spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden.

To leave. We should not change the construction here, but should have *should leave*.
Deliver you. Conduct you.
Letting. Hindering or spoiling the view.
Busy. Intricate, elaborate.
Welts. Borders.

I wish also, in the very middle, a fair mount, with three ascents, and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast; which I would have to be perfect circles, without any bulwarks or embossments; and the whole mount to be thirty foot high; and some fine banqueting-house, with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass.

For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures: the one, that sprinkleth or spouteth water; the other, a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty foot square, but without fish, or slime, or mud. For the first, the ornaments of images gilt, or of marble, which are in use, do well: but the main matter is, so to convey the water, as it never stay, either in the bowls or in the cistern; that the water be never by rest discoloured, green or red or the like, or gather any mossiness or putrefaction. Besides that, it is to be cleansed every day by the hand. Also some steps up to it, and some fine pavement about it, doth well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty, wherewith we will not trouble ourselves: as, that the bottom be finely

Banqueting-house. It was fashionable at dinner to serve the last course, known as the banquet, and consisting of cakes and fruit, in a summer house in the garden.

Chimneys. Fireplaces, and windows containing glass, both became popular in Tudor times, and were evidences of wealth.

Receipt. Receptacle.

As it never stay. So that it is always moving.

Curiosity. Ingenuity; clever arrangement.

paved, and with images; the sides likewise; and withal embellished with coloured glass, and such things of lustre; encompassed also with fine rails of low statuas. But the main point is the same which we mentioned in the former kind of fountain; which is, that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground, by some equality of bores, that it stay little. And for fine devices, of arching water without spilling, and making it rise in several forms (of feathers, drinking glasses, canopies, and the like), they be pretty things to look on, but nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed, as much as may be, to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it; but some thickets, made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses. For these are sweet, and prosper in the shade. And these to be in the heath, here and there, not in any order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild heaths), to be set, some with wild thyme; some with pinks; some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with periwinkle; some with violets; some with strawberries; some with cowslips; some with daisies; some with red roses; some with lilium convallium; some with sweet-

Statuas. Statuary.
Bores. Internal diameters.
But nothing. But add nothing.

williams red; some with bear's-foot; and the like low flowers, being withal sweet and sightly. Part of which heaps to be with standards of little bushes pricked upon their top, and part without. The standards to be roses; juniper; holly; berberries (but here and there, because of the smell of their blossom); red currants; gooseberries; rosemary; sweet-briar; and such like. But these standards to be kept with cutting, that they grow not out of course.

For the side grounds, you are to fill them with variety of alleys, private, to give a full shade, some of them, wheresoever the sun be. You are to frame some of them likewise for shelter, that when the wind blows sharp, you may walk as in a gallery. And those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends, to keep out the wind; and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, and no grass, because of going wet. In many of these alleys likewise, you are to set fruit-trees of all sorts; as well upon the walls as in ranges. And this would be generally observed, that the borders, wherein you plant your fruit-trees, be fair and large, and low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but thin and sparingly, lest they deceive the trees. At the end of both the side grounds, I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall

Pricked. Planted. The gardener still talks of pricking out his seedlings.
Out of course. Out of shape.
Going wet. Walking in them in wet weather.
Ranges. Rows.
Would. We should now use *should*.
Deceive. Deprive of nourishment.
Pretty height. Moderate height.

of the enclosure breast high, to look abroad into the fields.

For the main garden, I do not deny but there should be some fair alley, ranged on both sides with fruit-trees; and some pretty tufts of fruit-trees, and arbours with seats, set in some decent order; but these to be by no means set too thick; but to leave the main garden so as it be not close, but the air open and free. For as for shade, I would have you rest upon the alleys of the side grounds, there to walk, if you be disposed, in the heat of the year or day; but to make account that the main garden is for the more temperate parts of the year; and in the heat of summer, for the morning and the evening, or over-cast days.

For aviaries, I like them not, except they be of that largeness as they may be turfed, and have living plants and bushes set in them; that the birds may have more scope and natural nestling, and that no foulness appear in the floor of the aviary. So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing, not a model, but some general lines of it; and in this I have spared no cost. But it is nothing for great princes, that, for the most part, taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set

Rest upon. Depend upon.
Make account. Consider; reckon.
Platform. Plan.
Spared no cost. I have not tried to do it cheaply or parsimoniously, but my method would prove quite as cheap as that of princes who prepare their gardens under the direction of skilled gardeners.

their things together; and sometimes add statuas, and such things, for state and magnificence, but nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

Nothing to. They add nothing to.

Compare Temple's "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus," especially the second portion which deals with gardens in England.

She looks a sea Cybele fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers,
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters, and their powers:
And such she was, her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers,
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

LORD BYRON.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

To Chioggia with Oar and Sail

The *sandolo* is a boat shaped like the gondola, but smaller and lighter, without benches, and without the high steel prow or ferro which distinguishes the gondola. The gunwale is only just raised above the water, over which the little craft skims with a rapid bounding motion, affording an agreeable variation from the stately swanlike movement of the gondola. In one of these boats—called by him the *Fisolo* or *Seamew*—my friend Eustace had started with Antonio, intending to row the whole way to Chioggia, or, if the breeze favoured, to hoist a sail and help himself along. After breakfast, when the crew for my gondola had been assembled, Francesco and I followed with the Signora. It was one of those perfect mornings which occur as a respite from broken weather, when the air is windless and the light falls soft through haze on the horizon. As we broke into the lagoon behind the Redentore, the islands in front of us, St. Spirito, Poveglia, Malamocco, seemed as though

Chioggia. A town at the south entrance to the Venetian lagoon.

Redentore. One of the churches of Venice.

they were just lifted from the sea-line. The Euganeans, far away to westward, were bathed in mist, and almost blent with the blue sky. Our four rowers put their backs into their work; and soon we reached the port of Malamocco, where a breeze from the Adriatic caught us sideways for a while. This is the largest of the breaches in the Lidi, or raised sand-reefs, which protect Venice from the sea: it affords an entrance to vessels of draught like the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. We crossed the dancing wavelets of the port; but when we passed under the lee of Pelestrina, the breeze failed, and the lagoon was once again a sheet of undulating glass. At St. Pietro on this island a halt was made to give the oarsmen wine, and here we saw the women at their cottage doorways making lace. The old lace industry of Venice has recently been revived. From Burano and Pelestrina cargoes of hand-made imitations of the ancient fabrics are sent at intervals to Jesurun's magazine at St. Marco. He is the chief *impresario* of the trade, employing hundreds of hands, and speculating for a handsome profit in the foreign market on the price he gives his workwomen.

Now we are well lost in the lagoons—Venice no longer visible behind; the Alps and Euganeans shrouded in a noonday haze; the lowlands at the

Euganeans. A range of wooded hills. See Shelley's "Lines written among the Euganean Hills."
Malamocco. A port on the sandbanks.
Pelestrina. One of the sandbanks.
Burano is on an island north-west of Venice.
Impresario. Manager.

mouth of Brenta marked by clumps of trees ephemerally faint in silver silhouette against the filmy, shimmering horizon. Form and colour have disappeared in light irradiated vapour of an opal hue. And yet instinctively we know that we are not at sea; the different quality of the water, the piles emerging here and there above the surface, the suggestion of coast-lines scarcely felt in this infinity of lustre, all remind us that our voyage is confined to the charmed limits of an inland lake. At length the jutting headland of Pelestrina was reached. We broke across the Porto di Chioggia, and saw Chioggia itself ahead—a huddled mass of houses low upon the water. One by one, as we rowed steadily, the fishing-boats passed by, emerging from their harbour for a twelve hours' cruise upon the open sea. In a long line they came, with variegated sails of orange, red, and saffron, curiously chequered at the corners, and cantled with devices in contrasted tints. A little land-breeze carried them forward. The lagoon reflected their deep colours till they reached the port. Then, slightly swerving eastward on their course, but still in single file, they took the sea and scattered, like beautiful bright-plumaged birds, who from a streamlet float into a lake, and find their way at large according as each wills.

The Signorino and Antonio, though want of wind obliged them to row the whole way from Venice, had

Brenta. A river on the mainland.
Cantled. Divided into small pieces.
Signorino. Young master.

reached Chioggia an hour before, and stood waiting to receive us on the quay. It is a quaint town this Chioggia, which has always lived a separate life from that of Venice. Language and race and customs have held the two populations apart from those distant years when Genoa and the Republic of St. Mark fought their duel to the death out in the Chioggian harbours, down to these days, when your Venetian gondolier will tell you that the Chioggoto loves his pipe more than his *donna* or his wife. The main canal is lined with substantial palaces, attesting to old wealth and comfort. But from Chioggia, even more than from Venice, the tide of modern luxury and traffic has retreated. The place is left to fishing folk and builders of the fishing craft, whose wharves still form the liveliest quarter. Wandering about its wide deserted courts and *calli*, we feel the spirit of the decadent Venetian nobility. Passages from Goldoni's and Casanova's *Memoirs* occur to our memory. It seems easy to realise what they wrote about the dishevelled gaiety and lawless license of Chioggia in the days of powder, sword-knot, and *soprani*. Baffo

Duel to the death. Genoa and Venice were great rivals until the destruction of the Genoese fleet under their victorious admiral Doria (see p. 107) by Pisani and Zeno, Venetian admirals, 1380.

Donna. Mistress; lady.

Calli. Lanes; streets.

Goldoni (1707–93). A Venetian writer of comedies, who also wrote memoirs of his own life.

Casanova (1725–98). A Venetian adventurer whose memoirs are the revelation of the life of a scoundrel.

Soprani. Long cloaks.

Baffo. A licentious Venetian poet of the eighteenth century.

walks beside us in hypocritical composure of bag-wig and senatorial dignity, whispering unmentionable sonnets in his dialect of *Xe* and *Ga*. Somehow or another that last dotage of St. Mark's decrepitude is more recoverable by our fancy than the heroism of Pisani in the fourteenth century. From his prison in blockaded Venice the great admiral was sent forth on a forlorn hope, and blocked victorious Doria here with boats on which the nobles of the Golden Book had spent their fortunes. Pietro Doria boasted that with his own hands he would bridle the bronze horses of St. Mark. But now he found himself between the navy of Carlo Zeno in the Adriatic and the flotilla led by Vittore Pisani across the lagoon. It was in vain that the Republic of St. George strained every nerve to send him succour from the Ligurian sea; in vain that the lords of Padua kept opening communications with him from the mainland. From the 1st of January 1380 till the 21st of June the Venetians pressed the blockade ever closer, grappling their foemen in a grip that if relaxed one moment would have hurled him at their throats. The long and breathless struggle ended in the capitulation at Chioggia of what remained of Doria's forty-eight galleys and 14,000 men.

These great deeds are far away and hazy. The

Pisani had been imprisoned for his lack of success.

Golden Book. List of the nobles who could alone attain the highest positions in the government.

Bronze horses. A magnificent quadriga on the western front of the Cathedral of St. Mark.

Republic of St. George. Genoa.

brief sentences of mediæval annalists bring them less near to us than the *chroniques scandaleuses* of good-for-nothing scoundrels, whose vulgar adventures might be revived at the present hour with scarce a change of setting. Such is the force of *intimité* in literature. And yet Baffo and Casanova are as much of the past as Doria and Pisani. It is only perhaps that the survival of decadence in all we see around us, forms a fitting framework for our recollections of their vividly described corruption.

Not far from the landing-place a balustraded bridge of ample breadth and large bravura manner spans the main canal. Like everything at Chioggia, it is dirty and has fallen from its first estate. Yet neither time nor injury can obliterate style or wholly degrade marble. Hard by the bridge there are two rival inns. At one of these we ordered a sea-dinner—crabs, cuttle-fishes, soles, and turbots—which we ate at a table in the open air. Nothing divided us from the street except a row of Japanese privet-bushes in hooped tubs. Our banquet soon assumed a somewhat unpleasant similitude to that of Dives; for the Chioggoti, in all stages of decrepitude and squalor, crowded round to beg for scraps—indescribable old women, enveloped in their own petticoats thrown over their heads; girls hooded with sombre black mantles; old men wrinkled beyond recognition by their nearest relatives; jabber-

Chroniques scandaleuses. Chronicles of vice and crimes.
Intimité. Intimacy; self-revelation.
Bravura. Lively; spirited.
Dives. The rich man of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

ing, half-naked boys; slow, slouching fishermen with clay pipes in their mouths and philosophical acceptance on their sober foreheads.

That afternoon the gondola and sandolo were lashed together side by side. Two sails were raised, and in this lazy fashion we stole homewards, faster or slower according as the breeze freshened or slackened, landing now and then on islands, sauntering along the sea-walls which bulwark Venice from the Adriatic, and singing—those at least of us who had the power to sing. Four of our Venetians had trained voices and memories of inexhaustible music. Over the level water, with the ripple plashing at our keel, their songs went abroad, and mingled with the failing day. The barcaroles and serenades peculiar to Venice were, of course, in harmony with the occasion. But some transcripts from classical operas were even more attractive, through the dignity with which these men invested them. By the peculiarity of their treatment the *recitativo* of the stage assumed a solemn movement, marked in rhythm, which removed it from the commonplace into antiquity, and made me understand how cultivated music may pass back by natural unconscious transition into the realm of popular melody.

The sun sank, not splendidly, but quietly in banks of clouds above the Alps. Stars came out, uncertainly at first, and then in strength, reflected on the sea. The men of the Dogana watch-boat challenged us and let us pass. Madonna's lamp was twinkling from her

Dogana. Custom house at the entrance to the Grand Canal.

shrine upon the harbour-pile. The city grew before us. Stealing into Venice in that calm—stealing silently and shadowlike, with scarce a ruffle of the water, the masses of the town emerging out of darkness into twilight, till San Giorgio's gun boomed with a flash athwart our stern, and the gas-lamps of the Piazzetta swam into sight; all this was like a long enchanted chapter of romance. And now the music of our men had sunk to one faint whistling from Eustace of tunes in harmony with whispers at the prow.

Then came the steps of the Palazzo Venier and the deep-scented darkness of the garden. As we passed through to supper, I plucked a spray of yellow Banksia rose, and put it in my buttonhole. The dew was on its burnished leaves, and evening had drawn forth its perfume.

On the Lagoons

The mornings are spent in study, sometimes among pictures, sometimes in the Marcian Library, or again in those vast convent chambers of the Frari, where the archives of Venice load innumerable shelves. The afternoons invite us to a further flight upon the water. Both sandolo and gondola await our choice,

Piazzetta. Smaller open place leading to the Piazza or large square before the Cathedral.

Palazzo. Venice is famous for its palaces, formerly the homes of its nobles.

Frari. Church of the Franciscans.

and we may sail or row, according as the wind and inclination tempt us.

Yonder lies San Lazzaro, with the neat red buildings of the Armenian convent. The last oleander blossoms shine rosy pink above its walls against the pure blue sky as we glide into the little harbour. Boats piled with coal-black grapes block the landing-place, for the Padri are gathering their vintage from the Lido, and their presses run with new wine. Eustace and I have not come to revive memories of Byron—that curious patron-saint of the Armenian colony—or to inspect the printing-press, which issues books of little value for our studies. It is enough to pace the terrace, and linger half an hour beneath the low broad arches of the alleys pleached with vines, through which the domes and towers of Venice rise more beautiful by distance.

Malamocco lies considerably farther, and needs a full hour of stout rowing to reach it. Alighting there, we cross the narrow strip of land, and find ourselves upon the huge sea-wall—block piled on block—of Istrian stone in tiers and ranks, with cunning breathing-places for the waves to wreak their fury on and foam their force away in fretful waste. The very existence of Venice may be said to depend sometimes on these *murazzi*, which were finished at an immense cost by the Republic in the days of its decadence.

San Lazzaro. An island in the lagoon with an Armenian monastery containing an important Oriental library and printing office. Byron studied Armenian here. The Padri are the priests of the monastery.

The enormous monoliths which compose them had to be brought across the Adriatic in sailing vessels. Of all the Lidi, that of Malamocco is the weakest; and here, if anywhere, the sea might effect an entrance into the lagoon. Our gondoliers told us of some places where the *murazzi* were broken in a gale, or *sciroccale*, not very long ago. Lying awake in Venice, when the wind blows hard, one hears the sea thundering upon its sandy barrier, and blesses God for the *murazzi*. On such a night it happened once to me to dream a dream of Venice overwhelmed by water. I saw the billows roll across the smooth lagoon like a gigantic Eager. The Ducal Palace crumbled, and San Marco's domes went down. The Campanile rocked and shivered like a reed. And all along the Grand Canal the palaces swayed helpless, tottering to their fall, while boats piled high with men and women strove to stem the tide and save themselves from those impending ruins. It was a mad dream, born of the sea's roar and Tintoretto's painting. But this afternoon no such visions are suggested. The sea sleeps, and in the moist autumn air we break tall branches of the seeded yellowing samphire from hollows of the rocks, and bear them homeward in a wayward bouquet mixed with cobs of Indian-corn.

Fusina is another point for these excursions. It lies at the mouth of the Canal di Brenta, where the

Eager. The tidal bore at a river mouth.
San Marco. Church of St. Mark.
Campanile. Bell tower.
Tintoretto (1518–94). The last great Venetian painter. Venice contains many of his works.

mainland ends in marsh and meadows, intersected by broad renes. In spring the ditches bloom with fleurs-de-lys; in autumn they take sober colouring from lilac daisies and the delicate sea-lavender. Scores of tiny plants are turning scarlet on the brown moist earth; and when the sun goes down behind the Euganean hills, his crimson canopy of cloud, reflected on these shallows, muddy shoals, and wilderness of matted weeds, converts the common earth into a fairy-land of fabulous dyes. Purple, violet, and rose are spread around us. In front stretches the lagoon, tinted with a pale light from the east, and beyond this pallid mirror shines Venice—a long low broken line, touched with the softest roseate flush. Ere we reach the Giudecca on our homeward way, sunset has faded. The western skies have clad themselves in green, barred with dark fire-rimmed clouds. The Euganean hills stand like stupendous pyramids, Egyptian, solemn, against a lemon space on the horizon. The far reaches of the lagoons, the Alps, and islands assume those tones of glowing lilac which are the supreme beauty of Venetian evening. Then, at last, we see the first lamps glitter on the Zattere. The quiet of the night has come.

Words cannot be formed to express the endless varieties of Venetian sunset. The most magnificent follow after wet stormy days, when the west breaks suddenly into a labyrinth of fire, when chasms of clear

Giudecca. An island of Venice inhabited mainly by the fishermen.

Zattere. The street running along the north side of the Giudecca Canal.

turquoise heavens emerge, and horns of flame are flashed to the zenith, and unexpected splendours scale the fretted clouds, step over step, stealing along the purple caverns till the whole dome throbs. Or, again, after a fair day, a change of weather approaches, and high, infinitely high, the skies are woven over with a web of half-transparent cirrus-clouds. These in the afterglow blush crimson, and through their rifts the depth of heaven is of a hard and gemlike blue, and all the water turns to rose beneath them. I remember one such evening on the way back from Torcello. We were well out at sea between Mazzorbo and Murano. The ruddy arches overhead were reflected without interruption in the waveless ruddy lake below. Our black boat was the only dark spot in this sphere of splendour. We seemed to hang suspended; and such as this, I fancied, must be the feeling of an insect caught in the heart of a fiery-petalled rose. Yet not these melodramatic sunsets alone are beautiful. Even more exquisite, perhaps, are the lagoons, painted in monochrome of greys, with just one touch of pink upon a western cloud, scattered in ripples here and there on the waves below, reminding us that day has passed and evening come. And beautiful again are the calm settings of fair weather, when sea and sky alike are cheerful, and the topmost blades of the lagoon grass, peeping from the shallows, glance like emeralds upon the surface. There is no deep stirring of the spirit in a symphony of light and colour; but purity, peace, and freshness make their way into our hearts.

At the Lido

Of all these afternoon excursions, that to the Lido is most frequent. It has two points for approach. The more distant is the little station of San Nicoletto, at the mouth of the Porto. With an ebb-tide, the water of the lagoon runs past the mulberry gardens of this hamlet like a river. There is here a grove of acacia-trees, shadowy and dreamy, above deep grass, which even an Italian summer does not wither. The Riva is fairly broad, forming a promenade, where one may conjure up the personages of a century ago. For San Nicoletto used to be a fashionable resort before the other points of Lido had been occupied by pleasure-seekers. An artist even now will select its old-world quiet, leafy shade, and prospect through the islands of Vignole and Sant' Erasmo to snow-touched peaks of Antelao and Tofana, rather than the glare and bustle and extended view of Venice which its rival Sant' Elisabetta offers.

But when we want a plunge into the Adriatic, or a stroll along smooth sands, or a breath of genuine sea-breeze, or a handful of horned poppies from the dunes, or a lazy half-hour's contemplation of a limitless horizon flecked with russet sails, then we seek Sant' Elisabetta. Our boat is left at the landing-place. We saunter across the island and back again.

The Lido. Fashionable resort and bathing place on the sandbanks enclosing the lagoon. Other of these islands are named below.

Riva. Quay.

Antonio and Francesco wait and order wine, which we drink with them in the shade of the little *osteria's* wall.

A certain afternoon in May I well remember, for this visit to the Lido was marked by one of those apparitions which are as rare as they are welcome to the artist's soul. I have always held that in our modern life the only real equivalent for the antique mythopœic sense—that sense which enabled the Hellenic race to figure for themselves the powers of earth and air, streams and forests, and the presiding genii of places, under the forms of living human beings, is supplied by the appearance at some felicitous moment of a man or woman who impersonates for our imagination the essence of the beauty that environs us. It seems, at such a fortunate moment, as though we had been waiting for this revelation although perchance the want of it had not been previously felt. Our sensations and perceptions test themselves at the touchstone of this living individuality. The keynote of the whole music dimly sounding in our ears is struck. A melody emerges, clear in form and excellent in rhythm. The landscapes we have painted on our brain no longer lack their central figure. The life proper to the complex conditions we have studied is discovered, and every detail, judged by this standard of vitality, falls into its right relations.

I had been musing long that day and earnestly upon the mystery of the lagoons, their opaline transparencies of air and water, their fretful risings and sudden

Osteria. Hostelry; inn.

subsidence into calm, the treacherousness of their shoals, the sparkle and the splendour of their sunlight. I had asked myself how would a Greek sculptor have personified the elemental deity of these salt-water lakes, so different in quality from the Ægean or Ionian Sea? What would he find distinctive of their spirit? The Tritons of these shallows must be of other form and lineage than the fierce-eyed youth who blows his conch upon the curled crest of a wave, crying aloud to his comrades, as he bears the nymph away to caverns where the billows plunge in tideless instability.

We had picked up shells and looked for sea-horses on the Adriatic shore. Then we returned to give our boatmen wine beneath the vine-clad *pergola*. Four other men were there, drinking, and eating from a dish of fried fish set upon the coarse white linen cloth. Two of them rose soon and went away. Of the two who stayed, one was a large, middle-aged man; the other was still young. He was tall and sinewy, but slender, for these Venetians are rarely massive in their strength. Each limb is equally developed by the exercise of rowing upright, bending all the muscles to their stroke. Their bodies are elastically supple, with free sway from the hips and a mercurial poise upon the ankle. Stefano showed these qualities almost in exaggeration. The type in him was refined to its artistic perfection. Moreover, he was rarely in repose, but moved with a singular brusque grace. A black broad-brimmed hat was thrown back upon his matted

Tritons. The sea deities of classical mythology.

zazzera of dark hair tipped with dusky brown. This shock of hair, cut in flakes, and falling wilfully, reminded me of the lagoon grass when it darkens in autumn upon uncovered shoals, and sunset gilds its sombre edges. Fiery grey eyes beneath it gazed intensely, with compulsive effluence of electricity. It was the wild glance of a Triton. Short blonde moustache, dazzling teeth, skin bronzed, but showing white and healthful through open front and sleeves of lilac shirt. The dashing sparkle of this animate splendour, who looked to me as though the sea-waves and the sun had made him in some hour of secret and unquiet rapture, was somehow emphasised by a curious dint dividing his square chin—a cleft that harmonised with smile on lip and steady flame in eyes. I hardly know what effect it would have upon a reader to compare eyes to opals. Yet Stefano's eyes, as they met mine had the vitreous intensity of opals, as though the colour of Venetian waters were vitalised in them. This noticeable being had a rough, hoarse voice, which, to develop the parallel with a sea-god, might have screamed in storm or whispered raucous messages from crests of tossing billows.

I felt, as I looked, that here, for me at least, the mythopoem of the lagoons was humanised; the spirit of the salt-water lakes had appeared to me; the final touch of life emergent from nature had been given; I was satisfied; for I had seen a poem.

Then we rose, and wandered through the Jews' cemetery. It is a quiet place, where the flat grave-

Zazzera. Long hair hanging down the neck.

stones, inscribed in Hebrew and Italian, lie deep in Lido sand, waved over with wild grass and poppies. I would fain believe that no neglect, but rather the fashion of this folk, had left the monuments of generations to be thus resumed by nature. Yet, knowing nothing of the history of this burial-ground, I dare not affirm so much. There is one outlying piece of the cemetery which seems to contradict my charitable interpretation. It is not far from San Nicoletto. No enclosure marks it from the unconsecrated dunes. Acacia-trees sprout amid the monuments, and break the tablets with their thorny shoots upthrusting from the soil. Where patriarchs and rabbis sleep for centuries, the fishers of the sea now wander, and defile these habitations of the dead:

> Corruption most abhorred
> Mingling itself with their renowned ashes.

Some of the gravestones have been used to fence the towing-path; and one I saw, well carved with letters legible of Hebrew on fair Istrian marble, which roofed an open drain leading from the stable of a Christian dog.

Night in Venice

Night in Venice! Night is nowhere else so wonderful, unless it be in winter among the high Alps. But the nights of Venice and the nights of the mountains are too different in kind to be compared.

There is the ever-recurring miracle of the full moon

rising, before day is dead, behind San Giorgio, spreading a path of gold on the lagoon, which black boats traverse with the glow-worm lamp upon their prow; ascending the cloudless sky and silvering the domes of the Salute; pouring vitreous sheen upon the red lights of the Piazzetta; flooding the Grand Canal, and lifting the Rialto higher in ethereal whiteness; piercing but penetrating not the murky labyrinth of *rio* linked with *rio*, through which we wind in light and shadow, to reach once more the level glories and the luminous expanse of heaven beyond Misericordia.

This is the melodrama of Venetian moonlight; and if a single impression of the night has to be retained from one visit to Venice, those are fortunate who chance upon a full moon of fair weather. Yet I know not whether some quieter and soberer effects are not more thrilling. To-night, for example, the waning moon will rise late through veils of *scirocco*. Over the bridges of San Cristoforo and San Gregorio, through the deserted Calle di Mezzo, my friend and I walk in darkness, pass the marble basements of the Salute, and push our way along its Riva to the point of the Dogana. We are out at sea alone, between the Canalozzo and the Giudecca. A moist wind ruffles the water and cools our forehead. It is so dark that we can only see San Giorgio by the light reflected on it from the Piazzetta. The same light climbs the Campanile of St. Mark, and shows the golden angel in a

San Giorgio. A church on an island in the lagoon.
Salute. Church with spacious dome.
Rialto. Famous bridge over the Grand Canal.
Rio. Small canal.

mystery of gloom. The only noise that reaches us is a confused hum from the Piazza. Sitting and musing there, the blackness of the water whispers in our ears a tale of death. And now we hear a splash of oars, and gliding through the darkness comes a single boat. One man leaps upon the landing-place without a word and disappears. There is another wrapped in a military cloak asleep. I see his face beneath me, pale and quiet. The *barcaruolo* turns the point in silence. From the darkness they came; into the darkness they have gone. It is only an ordinary incident of coast-guard service. But the spirit of the night has made a poem of it.

Even tempestuous and rainy weather, though melancholy enough, is never sordid here. There is no noise from carriage traffic in Venice, and the sea-wind preserves the purity and transparency of the atmosphere. It had been raining all day, but at evening came a partial clearing. I went down to the Molo, where the large reach of the lagoon was all moon-silvered, and San Giorgio Maggiore dark against the bluish sky, and Santa Maria della Salute domed with moon-irradiated pearl, and the wet slabs of the Riva shimmering in moonlight, the whole misty sky, with its clouds and stellar spaces, drenched in moonlight, nothing but moonlight sensible except the tawny flare of gas-lamps and the orange lights of gondolas afloat upon the waters. On such a night the very spirit of

Piazza. Open space before the Cathedral of St. Mark.

Barcaruolo. Boatman; waterman.

Molo. The street between the Ducal Palace and the Canal of St. Mark's.

Venice is abroad. We feel why she is called Bride of the Sea.

Take yet another night. There had been a representation of Verdi's *Forza del Destino* at the Teatro Malibran. After midnight we walked homeward through the Merceria, crossed the Piazza, and dived into the narrow *calle* which leads to the *traghetto* of the Salute. It was a warm moist starless night, and there seemed no air to breathe in those narrow alleys. The gondolier was half asleep Eustace called him as we jumped into his boat, and rang our *soldi* on the gunwale. Then he arose and turned the *ferro* round, and stood across towards the Salute. Silently, insensibly, from the oppression of confinement in the airless streets to the liberty and immensity of the water and the night we passed. It was but two minutes ere we touched the shore and said good-night and went our way and left the ferryman. But in that brief passage he had opened our souls to everlasting things—the freshness, and the darkness, and the kindness of the brooding, all-enfolding night above the sea.

Verdi (1813–1901). The last and most successful of the writers of Italian opera.
Merceria. The main business quarter.
Traghetto. Ferry.
Soldi. Small Italian coins.
Ferro. High steel prow of the gondola.

Read also Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, especially vol. ii.

N. E. RICHSEN.

Now the golden Morn aloft
  Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
  She woes the tardy Spring;
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground,
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
  Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance
  The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the skylark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

T. GRAY.

EDWARD THOMAS

I TURN into my inn with unusual hopes. For it was here some years ago that I met for the first time a remarkable man. It was nine o'clock on a late July evening, and the haymakers, only just set free, came stamping into the bar. The last waggon-load stopped at the door while the red-whiskered carter stood, one hand on the latch, and drank his pint before leading his horses into the stall. After the haymakers, in their pale corduroys and dirty white slops, came a tall, spare, shock-headed man, not recently shaved, dressed in grey—grey coat, grey breeches and stockings, and a tall, hard felt hat that was old and grey. He called for sixpenny ale, and wiping the hay dust from his neck sat down beside me.

No, he is not here to-day. Perhaps he will never get out of London again.

I asked him the way to the nearest village, and whether a bed was to be had there. He answered that it was some way off—paused, looked at me, drank from his tankard—and added in a lower voice that he would be glad if I would come and share his place. Such an unusual invitation enforced assent.

A quarter of a mile down the next by-way he opened

A Return to Nature. From *The South Country*, published 1909.

a little oaken gate that slammed after us, and there, in a corner of a small, flat field, was his sleeping place, under an oak. Would I care to join him in fried bacon and broad beans and tea at six the next morning?

He lit a wisp of hay and soon had a fire burning, and brought over some hay and sacks for the second bed. The lights of the farmhouse shone on the other side of the little field behind lilac bushes. The farmhouse pump gave out a cry like a guinea fowl for a few minutes. Then the lights went out. I asked the name of the farm and he told me.

"I come here almost every summer for the haymaking," he said, and detecting my surprise that it was not his first year of haymaking, he continued—

"It is my tenth summer, to be exact."

He was a man of hardly over thirty, and I noticed that his hands, though small and fine, were rough and warty and dark. Thoughtlessly I remarked that he must find the winter hard if he travelled like this all the year round.

"Yes," he said, with a sigh, "it is, and that is why I go back in the winter; at least partly why."

"Go back——?"

"Yes, to London."

I was still perplexed. He had the air of a town-bred man of the clerkly class, but no accent, and I could not think what he did in London that was compatible with his present life.

"Are you a Londoner, then?"

"Yes, and no. I was born at the village of —— in Caermarthenshire. My father was a clerk in a coal

merchant's office of the neighbouring town. But he thought to better himself, worked hard in the evenings and came to London, when I was seven, for a better-paid post. We lived in Wandsworth in a small street newly built. I went to a middle-class school close by until I was sixteen, and then I went into a silk merchant's office. My father died soon after. He had never been strong, and from the first year's work in the city, I have heard my mother say, he was a doomed man. He made no friends. While I was young he gave up all his spare time to me and was happy, wheeling me, my mother walking alongside, out into the country on every Sunday that was not soaking wet, and nearly every Saturday afternoon, too.

"It was on one of these excursions, when they had left me to myself a little while to talk more gravely than they usually did when we were out like that, that there was suddenly opened before me—like a yawning pit, yet not only beneath me but on every side—infinity, endless time, endless space; it was thrust upon me, I could not grasp it, I only closed my eyes and shuddered and knew that not even my father could save me from it, then in a minute it was gone. To a more blessed child some fair or imposing vision might have risen up out of the deep and given him a profounder if a sadder eye for life and the world. How unlike it was to the mystic's trance, feeling out with infinite soul to earth and stars and sea and remote

Mystic's trance. The mystics are a religious sect who aspire to a more direct intercourse with God through the inward perception of the mind (sometimes by trance or vision) than is afforded by revelation.

time and recognising his oneness with them. To me, but later than that, this occasionally recurring experience was as an intimation of the endless pale road, before and behind, which the soul has to travel: it was a terror that enrolled me as one of the helpless, superfluous ones of the earth.

"I was their only child that lived, and my father's joy in me was very great, equalled only by his misery at the life which he had to lead and which he foresaw for me. He used to read to me, waking me up for the purpose sometimes when he reached home late, or if he did not do that rousing me an hour before breakfast. His favourite books were *The Compleat Angler* and *Lavengro*, the poems of Wordsworth, the diaries of Thoreau and the *Natural History of Selborne*. I remember crying—when I was twelve—with despair of human nature's fickleness to think that White, even though he was an old man, could have it in his heart to write that farewell to natural history at the end of his last letter to Barrington. My father read

Compleat Angler. The well-known work of Izaak Walton (1593–1683).

Lavengro. A title given by the gipsies to George Borrow (1803–81), author, traveller and philologist. Lavengro = word-master. The word is used by Borrow as the title of one of his books.

Thoreau. See page 248.

Natural History of Selborne. The observations of natural phenomena in the parish of Selborne, Hampshire, by its curate, the Rev. Gilbert White. The work was published in 1789, and inaugurated a new branch of English literature. It is in the form of a series of letters written to Thomas Pennant and the Hon. Daines Barrington. See Letter lxvi. for his farewell to natural history.

these books to me several times in a sad, hoarse voice —as it seemed to me, though when he paused he was happy enough—which I had often great trouble to endure as I got older and able and willing to read for myself. So full was I of a sense of the real wild country which I had never seen—the Black Mountains of Caermarthen I hardly recalled—that I became fanciful, and despised the lavish creeper that hung like a costly dress over the fence between our garden and the next because the earth it grew in was not red earth but a black pasty compound, full of cinders and mortar and decayed rags and kittens. I used to like to go to the blacksmith's to smell the singeing hoof and to the tram-stables and smell the horses, and see the men standing about in loose shirts, hanging braces, bare arms, clay pipes, with a sort of free look that I could not see elsewhere. The navvies at work in the road or on the railway line were a tremendous pleasure, and I noticed that the clerks waiting for their trains in the morning loved to watch these hulking free and easy men doing something that looked as if it mattered, not like their own ledger work and so on. I had the same sort of pleasure looking up the street that rose from east to west and seeing the sun set between the two precipices of brick wall at the top; it was as if a gate opened there and through it all the people and things that saddened me had disappeared and left me to myself; it was like the pit, too, that opened before me as a little child.

"My father died of consumption. I was then just able to earn my own living, so I was left in lodgings and my mother returned to Wales. I worked hard at

figures; at least I went early and stayed late and never stopped to talk to the others; yet I made frequent mistakes, and the figures swam in a mist of American rivers and English waterfalls and gipsy camps, so that it was a wonder I could ever see my Thoreau and Wordsworth and Borrow without these figures. Fancy men adopting as a cry the 'right to work'! Apparently they are too broken-spirited to think of a right to live, and would be content only to work. It is not wonderful that with such a cry they do very little. Men cannot fight hard for the 'right to work' as I did. My office was at the bottom of a pit. The four sides of the pit were walls with many windows, and I could hear voices speaking in the rooms behind and the click of typewriters, but could not see into them. Only for two or three days in June could I see the sun out of the pit. But in the hot days blue-bottles buzzed on my panes and I took care of them until one by one they lay dead upon the window ledge. There were no spiders and they seemed to have a good life. Sparrows sometimes flew up and down the pit, and once for a week I had the company of a black-and-white pigeon. It sat day after day in a hole in the opposite wall until it died and fell on to the paved yard below. The clouds sailed over the top of the pit. Sea-gulls flew over, all golden-winged, in October afternoons. I liked the fog when all the lights were lit, and though we did not know one another in the pit we seemed to keep one another company. But I liked the rain best of all. It used to splash down from all sides and make a country noise, and I looked up and

saw the quaint cowls sitting like cats on the chimney-pots, and had ridiculous fancies that took me far away for a second or two.

"The worst time of all was two or three years after my father's death. I spent most of my poor earnings on clothes; I took the trouble to talk and smoke and think as much as possible like the other nine young men in the railway carriage that took me into the city; I learned their horrible, cowardly scorn for those who were poor or outlandish, and for all things that were not like those in their own houses or in those of the richer people of their acquaintance or envy. We were slaves, and we gilded our collars."

"But the journalist and hack writer," said I, "is worse off. At least your master only asked for your dregs. The hack writer is asked to give everything that can be turned into words at short notice, and so the collar round his neck is never taken off as yours was between six in the afternoon and nine in the morning."

"Ah, but it is open to you to do good or bad. We could only do bad. All day we were doing things which we did not understand, which could not in any way concern us, which had nothing to do with what we had been taught at school, had read in books or had heard from our fathers and mothers. When he was angry the head of the firm used to say we had better take care or a machine would supersede us in ten years instead of twenty. We had been driven out of life into a corner in an underground passage

Hack writer. One who hires himself out for any kind of literary work; a literary drudge.

where everything was unnecessary that did not help us to be quick at figures, or taking down letters from dictation, or neat in dress and obedient to the slaves who were set over us. When we were out of the office we could do nothing which unfitted us for it. The head of the firm used to say that we were each 'playing a part, however humble, in the sublime machine of modern civilisation, that not one of us was unnecessary, and that we must no more complain or grow restive than does the earth because it is one of the least elements in this majestic universe.' We continued to be neat when we were away from the office, we were disobedient to everything and everybody else that was not armed with the power of taking away our bread—to the old, the poor, the children, the women, the ideas which we had never dreamed of, and that came among us as a white blackbird comes in the winter to a barbarous parish where keeper and gardener and farmer go out with their guns and stalk it from hedge to hedge until, starved and conspicuous and rather apart from its companions, it falls to their beastly shot and is sold to one of the gentry who puts it into a glass case.

"Sometimes on a Saturday or Sunday I broke away in a vague unrest, and walked alone to the pretty places where my father and mother had taken me as a little boy. Most of them I had not seen for five or six years. My visits were often formal. I walked

White blackbird. The blackbird occasionally appears as a white or cream-coloured bird, and is then often hunted down as a curiosity.

out and was glad to be back to the lights of the street, the strong tea, the newspaper and the novel. But one day I went farther than usual to a wood where we used to go without interference and, after finding all the blackbirds' and thrushes' and robins' nests within reach, boil a kettle and have tea. I had never in that wood seen any man or woman except my father and mother; never heard a voice except theirs—my father perhaps reading Wordsworth aloud—and the singing birds' and the moorhens' in the pond at the edge; it used to shut out everything but what I had learned to love most, sunshine and wind and flowers and their love. When I saw it again I cried; I really could not help it. For a road had been made alongside of it, and the builder's workmen going to and fro had made a dozen gaps in the hedge and trodden the wood backward and forward and broken down the branches and made it noisome. Worse than all, the field, the golden field where I used to lie among the buttercups and be alone with the blue sky—where I first felt the largeness and dearness and nearness of the blue sky as a child of eight and put up my hand in my delight to draw it through the soft blue substance that seemed so near—the field was enclosed, a chapel built; it was a cemetery for all the unknown herd, strange to one another, strange to every one else, that filled the new houses spreading over the land.

"At first I was for running away at once. But the sight made me faint-hearted and my legs dragged, and

Noisome. Noxious; unwholesome.

it was all I could do to get home—I mean, to my lodgings.

"However, I was quite different after that. I was ashamed of my ways, and now spent all my spare time and money in going out into the country as far as possible, and reading the old books and the new ones that I could hear of in the same spirit. I lived for these things. It was now that I knew my slavery. Everything reminded me of it. The return half of my railway ticket to the country said plainly, 'You have got to be back at —— not later than 10.39 p.m.' Then I used to go a different way back or even walk the whole way to avoid having this thing in my pocket that proclaimed me a slave.

"It was now that I first accepted the invitation of a relation who lived on the east coast very near the sea. The sea had a sandy shore bounded by a perpendicular sandy cliff, to the edge of which came rough moorland. The sea washed the foot of the cliff at high tide and swept the yellow sand clean twice a day, wiping away all footprints and leaving a fresh arrangement of blue pebbles glistening in the bitter wind. It was impossible to be more alone than on this sand, and I was contented again. The sea brought back the feelings I had when I lay in the buttercup field—the cemetery—and looked into the sky. Walking over the moor the undulations of the land hid and revealed the sea in an always unexpected way, and often as I turned suddenly I seemed to see the blue sky extended so as to reach nearly to my feet, and half-way up it went small brown or white clouds like birds—like ships—

in fact they were ships sailing on a sea that mingled with the sky. It seemed a beautiful life, where clouds could not help being finely spun or carved, or pebbles help being delicious to eye and touch. But out of the extremity of my happiness came my worst grief. I fell in love. I fell in love with one of my cousins, a girl of seventeen. She never professed to return my love, but she was a most true friend, and for a time I was intoxicated with the delight; I now envy even the brief moment of pain and misery that I had in those days.

"She was clever and understanding so that I was always at my best with her, and yet, too, she was as sweet as a child and strange as an animal. The few moments of pain were when I saw her with the other girls. When they were together, running on the sands or talking or dancing, they seemed all to be one, like the wind; and sometimes I thought that like the wind they had no heart amongst them—except mine that raced with the runners and sighed among the laughers. It was lovely to see her with animals! with cows or horses, her implicit motherhood going out to them in an animal kindness, a bluff tenderness without thought. At times I looked carefully and solemnly into her eyes until I was lost in a curious pleasure like that of walking in a shadowy, still, cold place, a cathedral or wintry grove—she had the largest of dark grey eyes; and she did not turn away or smile, but looked fearlessly forward, careless and unashamed like a deep pool in a wood unused to wayfarers. Then she seemed so much a child, and I longed

for the days (which I had never really had) when I could have been as careless and bold and free as she was. No, I could never teach those eyes and lips the ways of love: that was for some boy to do. And I thought I will be content to love her and to have her friendliness. I was old for my years, and my life without the influence of women in office and lodgings, I thought, had made me unfit for her delicate ways. I turned away and the sunny ships in the sea were mournful because of my thoughts. But I could not wait. I told her my love. She was not angry or indifferent. She did not reject it. She was afraid. They sent her away to college. She overworked and overplayed, and they have told me she is now a schoolmistress. I see her sad and firm with folded hands. When I knew her she was tall and straight, with long brown hair in two heavy plaits, a shining, rounded brow, dark-lashed, grey eyes, and a smile of inexpressible sweetness in which I once or twice surprised her, pleased with the happiness and beauty of her thoughts and of Nature.

"When I had lost her, or thought I had—

> Not comforted to live
> But that there is this jewel in the world
> Which I may see again——

I resolved that I would not be a slave any more. For a few weeks I used to fancy it was only by a chance I had lost her, and every now and then as I mused over it I got heated and my thoughts raced

Not comforted to live, etc. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, I. i., ll. 90–92.

forward as if in the hope of overtaking and averting that very evil chance which had already befallen, and had in fact caused the train of thought.

" I saved every penny that I could from my salary. In six months I had saved twenty pounds. Out of this I bought a new black suit, a pair of boots and a hat, and gave them to my landlady and asked her to take care of them until I returned, which might be at the end of October. It was then April. I gave notice to my employers and left them. The next day very early I left London, and walked all day and all night until I reached the sea. There I bathed and ate a hearty meal, and walking along the cliffs till I came to a small farmhouse I engaged a bedroom, and there I slept and thought and slept undisturbed for twenty-four hours. I was free. I was free to dream myself no longer one of the mob-led mob. With care my money would last until midsummer, even if I did no work.

" It was a warm, wet May, and by the end of the month there was a plentiful crop of weeds, and I had no difficulty in getting work at hoeing. Strawberry picking and cherry picking followed. I was very slow and earned little, but it was now warm enough to sleep out, and I earned my food. By the end of July, as I liked the work, I was as useful with my hayrake as any of the women and better than most of the odd hands. I wore my fingers raw at tying up barley and oats and, later on, at feeding the threshing machine. But before the end of October the weather drove me back to London, with ten shillings in my pocket.

"I put on my new clothes and got as good a berth as my first one, and in the hope of another spring and summer out of doors I passed the winter cheerfully. To save more money I went to bed as soon as I got back to my lodgings, and read myself to sleep.

"In May a spell of fine weather drove me to give notice again, and I walked as far as Maidstone the first day. My second summer was like my first. I was already known at half-a-dozen farms. When they could not give me work at once they gave me leave to fish in the three or four ponds to be found on all the farms in the Weald of Kent, and I had many a large, if not always savoury, meal of tench and eels. At the end of the summer I had three pounds in my pocket, and little less by the end of October.

"The winter I passed as before. For five years I lived in this way. Then, for the sake of going abroad on my savings, I worked for a whole year at a desk, and spent four months along the Loire and down to Bordeaux; from there I worked my passage to Newport. Since then I have gone back to my old plan."

Here he paused and mused. I asked him if he still found it easy to get work in London.

"No, that's it," he replied; "my handwriting is worse and it is slow. The first weeks in London seem to undo all the good of my summer outing, especially as my salary is less than it used to be. They begin to ask me if I am a married man when I apply for work. The November rains remind me that I have rheumatism. It is my great fear that I may need a doctor, and so spend my savings, and be unable to

leave London until field work is plentiful in June. But I have my freedom; I could, if necessary, take an under-cowman's place and live entirely on the land. They begin to look at my hands when I apply for clerical work, and I can't wear gloves."

"And ten years hence?"

"That is ten years too far ahead for me to look, though I am less cheerful than I used to be. I realise that I belong to the suburbs still. I belong to no class or race, and have no traditions. We of the suburbs are a muddy, confused, hesitating mass, of small courage though much endurance. As for myself, I am world-conscious, and hence suffer unutterable loneliness. I know what bitterness it is to be lacking in those strong tastes and impulses which, blinding men to what does not concern them, enable them to live with a high heart. For example, I have a sensitive palate and am glad of my food, yet whenever I taste lamb—which I do when I can—my pleasure is spoilt by the sight of the butcher carrying a lamb under his arm. There it is. I am sensitive on all sides. Your true man would either forget the sight or he would be moved to a crusade. I can do neither.

"I am weary of seeing things, the outsides of things, for I see nothing else. It makes me wretched to think what swallows are to many children and poets and other men, while to me they are nothing but inimitable, compact dark weights tumbling I do not know how through the translucent air—nothing more, and yet I know they are something more. I apprehend their weight, buoyancy and velocity as they really are, but

I have no vision. Then it is that I remember those words of Sir Thomas Browne's—

"'I am sure there is a common spirit that plays within us, yet makes no part in us; and that it is the Spirit of God, the fire and scintillation of that noble and mighty essence, which is the life and radical heat of spirits. . . . This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters and in six days hatched the world; this is that irradiation that dispels the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whosoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this spirit (though I feel his pulse) I dare not say he lives; for truly without this, to me there is no heat under the tropic; nor any light, though I dwell in the body of the sun.'

"I dare not say I live. And yet the cows, the well-fed, quiet cows, in this fine soft weather stare enviously at me through the gate, though they know nothing of death, and I know it must come, and that even though often desired, when it comes it will be unwelcome—— Yet they stare enviously at me, I am sure.

"I have no courage. I can at least endure. I can use my freedom to become a slave again, and at least I know that I have lost nothing by my way of living. Yes, I can endure, and if after my death I am asked questions difficult to answer, I can ask one that is

Scintillation. Flash, spark. The quotation is from the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne (1605–82), physician and author. See Part I., Sect. xxxii.

unanswerable which I have more times asked myself —often in London, but not here. Here I love my food and my work, my rest. My dreams are good. I am not unkindly spoken to; I make no enemies.

"But yet I cannot look forward—there is nothing ahead—just as I cannot look back. My people have not built; they were not settled on the earth; they did nothing; they were oil or grit in a great machine; they took their food and shelter modestly and not ungratefully from powers above that were neither kind nor cruel. I hope I do no less; I wish I could do more.

"Now again returns that old feeling of my childhood—I felt it when I had left my cousin—I have felt it suddenly not only in London, but on the top of the Downs and by the sea; the immense loneliness of the world, as if the next moment I might be outside of all visible things. You know how it is, on a still summer evening, so warm that the ploughman and his wife have not sent their children to bed, and they are playing, and their loud voices startle the thought of the woods; my feeling is like that, space and quiet and my own littleness stupendously exaggerated. I have wished I could lay down my thoughts and desires and noises and stirrings and cease to trouble that great peace. It was, perhaps, of this loneliness that the Psalmist spoke: 'My days are consumed like smoke. . . . I watch, and am as a sparrow alone on the housetop.' The world is wrong,

Psalmist. See Psalm cii. 3, 7.

but the night is fine; the dew light and the moist air is full of the honeysuckle scent. I will smoke another pipe of your tobacco and leave you for a while. I like to be alone before I sleep."

The next I saw of him was when he was frying bacon and boiling beans for our meal. "Forget my night thoughts," he said, "and be thankful for the white dry road and the blue sky. We are not so young but that we must be glad it is summer and fine. As for me, the dry weather is so sweet that I like the smell of elder flower and the haycart horses' dung and the dust that get into the throat of an evening. Good-bye."

He went away to wash at the pump, as the cattle spread out from the milking-stalls into the field and filled it with their sweet breath and the sound of their biting the thick grass.

I saw him again a few years later.

London was hot and dry, and would have been parched, cracked and shrivelled had it been alive instead of dead. The masonry was so dry that the eye wearied of it before the feet wearied of the pavement, and both desired the rain that makes the city at one with Nature. The plane-trees were like so many captives along the streets, shackled to the flagstones, pelted with dust, humiliated, all their rusticity ravished though not forgotten. The very sky, lofty, blue, white-clouded, was parched, the blue and the white being soiled by a hot, yellowish-grey scum that harmonises with gritty pavements and stark towers and spires. The fairest thing to be seen—away from

the river—was the intense young green of the grass-blades trying to grow up through the gratings which surround the trees of the streets. The grass was a prophet muttering wild, ambiguous things, and since his voice was very small and came from underground, it was hard to hear him, even without understanding. Thousands tread down the grass, so that except for a few hours at night it can never emerge from the grating.

Some vast machinery plunged and thundered behind the walls, but though they trembled and grew hot, it burst not through. Even so the multitude in the streets, of men and horses and machines and carriages of all kinds, roared and moved swiftly and continuously, encaged within walls that are invisible; and they also never burst through. Both are free to do what they are told. All the crowd seem a little more securely imprisoned than he who watches, because he is aware of his bars; but they move on, or seem to do, on and on, round and round, as thoughtless as the belt of an engine.

There was not one face I knew; not one smiled; not one relaxed or contracted with a thought, an emotion, a fancy; but all were clear, hard, and fixed in a vice, so that though they were infinite in their variety—no two eyebrows set the same way, no two mouths in the same relation to the eyes—the variety seemed the product of a senseless ingenuity and immense leisure, as of a sublime philatelist. Hardly one spoke; only the women moved from left to right instead of straight on, and their voices were

inaudible when their lips moved. The roar in which all played a part developed into a kind of silence which not any one of these millions could break; the sea does not absorb the little rivers more completely than this silence the voices of men and women, than this solitude their personalities. Now and then a face changed, an eyebrow was cocked, or a mouth fell; but it meant less to me than the flutter as of a bird when drop by drop the rain drips from the beeches and gives a plash and a trembling to one leaf and then another in the undergrowth. There is a more than human force in the movement of the multitude, more than the sum of all the forces in the arched necks, the grinding chest muscles, and the firm feet of the horses, the grace of the bright women, the persistency of the tall men and thick men. They cannot stop. They look stupid or callous or blank or even cruel. They are going about another's business; they conceal their own, hiding it so that they forget (as a drunkard forgets where he has hidden his gold) where they have hidden it, hiding their souls under something stiffer and darker than the clothing of their bodies. It is hard to understand why they do not sometimes stop one another, to demand where the soul and the soul's business is hid, to snatch away the masks. It was intolerable that they were not known to me, that I was not known to them, that we should go on like waves of the sea, obeying whatever moon it is that sends us thundering on the unscalable shores of night and day. Such force, such determination as moved us along the burning streets might

scale Olympus. Where was he who could lead the storming-party?

Between a pack of cabs and a pack of 'buses there was a quiet space of fifty yards in length; for a little while it seemed that the waves were refusing their task. There was not one black coat, not one horse, not one brightly loaded 'bus: no haste. It was a procession.

In front marched a tall son of man, with white black-bearded face, long black hair, more like plumage than hair in its abundance and form, and he wore no hat. He walked straight as a soldier, but with long, slow steps, and his head hung so that his bare breast supported it, for he had no coat and his shirt was half open. He had knee-breeches, bare dark legs, and shoes on his feet. His hands were behind his back, as if he were handcuffed. Two men walked beside him in other men's black clothes and black hats worn grey—two unnoticeable human beings, snub-nosed, with small, rough beards, dull eyes, shuffling gait. Two others followed them close, each carrying one of the poles of a small white banner inscribed with the words: "The Unemployed." These also were unnoticeable, thin, grey, bent, but young, their clothes, their faces, their hair, their hats almost the same dry colour as the road. It was impossible to say what their features were, because their heads hung down and their hats were drawn well on to their heads, and their

Olympus. A mountain in Thessaly, the home of the Gods of Greek Mythology. The Titans attempted to scale the mountain when they rebelled against Zeus.

eyes were unseen. They could not keep step, nor walk side by side, and their banner was always shaky and always awry. Next, in no order, came three others of the same kind, shambling like the rest, of middle height, moderately ill-dressed, moderately thin, their hands in their pockets. In one of these I recognised the man who was born in Caermarthenshire. A cart came close behind, drawn by a fat grey donkey who needed no driving, for the one who rode in the cart had his back to the shafts, and, leaning forward on a tub into which money was expected to be thrown, he appeared to be talking to those who trailed at the back, for he waved an arm and wagged his yellow beard. He was fat, and dressed in a silk hat, frock-coat and striped trousers, almost too ancient to be ridiculous had they not kept company with a jaunty pair of yellow boots. He was midway between a seaside minstrel and a minister, had not one gesture destroyed the resemblance by showing that he wore no socks. Round about his coat also were the words: "The Unemployed," repeated or crudely varied. Those whom he addressed were the fifteen or twenty who completed the procession but seemed not to listen. They were all bent, young or middle-aged men, fair-haired, with unintentional beards, road-coloured skins and slightly darker clothes. Many wore overcoats, the collars turned up, and some had nothing under them except a shirt, and one not that. All with hands in pockets, one carrying a pipe, all silent and ashamed, struggled onward with bent knees. No two walked together; there was no

approach to a row or a column in their arrangement, nor was there any pleasing irregularity as of plants grown from chance-scattered seed; by no means could they have been made to express more feebleness, more unbrotherliness, more lack of principle, purpose or control. Each had the look of the meanest thief between his captors. Two blue, benevolent, impersonal policemen, large men, occasionally lifted their arms as if to help forward the contemptible procession; sometimes, with a quick motion of the hand, they caused the straggling rear to double their pace for a few yards by running with knees yet more bent and coat-tails flapping and hands still deep in pockets —only for a few yards, for their walking pace was their best, all having the same strength, the same middle height, the same stride, though no two could be seen keeping step.

The traffic thickened, and amidst the horses that nodded and trampled and the motor-cars that fumed and fretted the procession was closed up into a grey block behind the donkey-cart. On one side of the donkey was the black-bearded man, his right arm now resting on the animal's neck; on the other side the policemen; in front the standard-bearers hung down their heads and held up their poles. Often the only remnant visible was the raven crest of the leader.

The multitude on the pavement continued to press straight onward, or to flit in and out of coloured shops. None looked at the standard, the dark man and his cloudy followers, except a few of the smallest

newspaper boys who had a few spare minutes and rushed over to march with them in the hope of music or a speech or a conflict. The straight flower-girl flashed her eyes as she stood on the kerb, her left arm curving with divine grace round the shawl-hidden child at her bosom, her left hand thrust out full of roses. The tender, well-dressed women leaning on the arms of their men smiled faintly, a little pitiful, but gladly conscious of their own security and pleasantness. Men with the historic sense glanced and noted the fact that there was a procession. One man, standing on the kerb, took a sovereign from his pocket, looked at it and then at the unemployed, made a little gesture of utter bewilderment, and dropping the coin down into the drain below, continued to watch. Comfortable clerks and others of the servile realised that here were the unemployed about whom the newspapers had said this and that—(" a pressing question "—" a very complicated question not to be decided in a hurry "—" it is receiving the attention of some of the best intellects of the time "—" our special reporter is making a full investigation "—" who are the genuine and who are the impostors? "—" connected with Socialist intrigues ")—and they repeated the word " Socialism " and smiled at the bare legs of the son of man and the yellow boots of the orator. Next day they would smile again with pride that they had seen the procession which ended in feeble, violent speeches against the Army and the Rich, in four arrests and an imprisonment. For they spoke in voices gentle with hunger. They were angry

and uttered curses. One waved an arm against a palace, an arm that could scarcely hold out a revolver even were all the kings sitting in a row to tempt him. In the crowd and disturbance the leader fell and fainted. They propped him in their arms and cleared a space about him. "Death of Nelson," suggested an onlooker, laughing, as he observed the attitude and the knee-breeches. "If he had only a crown of thorns . . ." said another, pleased by the group. "Wants a bit of skilly and real hard work," said a third.

Read White's letter to Barrington (No. lxvi.) in his *Natural History of Selborne*. Chapter lxiv. of Borrow's *Lavengro* is also interesting in *contrast* with this essay.

TO A GRASSHOPPER

Voice of the summer-wind,
Joy of the summer-plain,
Life of the summer-hours,
Carol clearly, bound along.
No Tithon thou as poets feign,
(Shame fall 'em, they are deaf and blind)
But an insect lithe and strong,
Bowing the seeded summer flowers.
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,
Vaulting on thine airy feet.
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
Thou art a mailéd warrior in youth and strength complete;
Armed cap-a-pie,
Full fair to see;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,
A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

TENNYSON.

EDWARD THOMAS

THE high, partridge-coloured heathland rolls southward, with small ridges as of a sea broken by cross winds, or as if the heather and the hard gorse cushions had grown over ruins which time had not yet smoothed into the right curves of perfect death. A gentle wind changes the grass from silver to green, from green to silver, by depressing or lifting up the blades. In the dry heather and pallid herbage the wind sounds all the stops of despair. The note that each produces is faint, and the combination hardly louder than the sound that fancy makes among the tombs. Nevertheless, the enchantment of that little noise pours into the air and heart a sympathy with the thousand microscopic sorrows and uncertainties of the inanimate world—a feeling that is part of the melancholy importunately intruding on a day of early spring. The larks rise, linking earth and sky with their songs, and the stonechats are restless.

There are no trees. The only house is a little, white, thatched cottage among some shining dark boats, on the distant rosy shore.

The sea makes no sound. It changes with the sky so often and so subtly that its variations are to be

Clouds over the Sea. From *The Heart of England*, 1909.

described, if at all, in terms not of colour but of thought. All such moods as pass through the mind of a lonely man, during long hours in a place where the outside world does not disturb him and he lives on memory and pure reflection, are symbolised by those changes on the surface of the sea. Now it is one thing and now another; the growth is imperceptible and those moods that have passed are as hard to reconstruct as the links of a long, fluctuating reverie. For the most part it is grey, a grey full of meditation and discontent.

The heathland changes with the sea. Both take their thoughts and fancies from the sky. For this is a world of clouds; earth and sea are made by them what they are. They make the sea, and they make the little pools, blue, silver or grey, among the gorse. The clouds are always there; inhabiting a dome that is about fifty miles from the horizon up and down to the opposite horizon; and yet they are never the same.

Where do the clouds go?

The large white clouds, mountainous and of alabaster and with looks of everlastingness. I see them in the north at midday, making the hills seem level with the plain. I turn away my eyes and when next I look they are gone. They vanish like childish things. One day I made an appointment with another child to play marbles on the next morning; I never went; I forgot; I never saw the boy again, and I remember it now, for I never played marbles after that.

The high white halcyons of summer skies.

The distant, icy ranges of rounded pearl down which,

in terrace after terrace, the sun walks like a king to the sea in May. As I watch they grow big like roses in the sun, and they change and vanish and reappear beneath the restless sculptor's hand. If a man loves what is passing away, he loves then.

Those little dove-like clouds that for a moment stain the dusky clouds after an April storm—are they a metamorphosis of the Pleiades? They are gone like music; for sometimes the memory of them equals the reality and sometimes they are not to be recalled.

Those Elysian, white sierras in the east, which, at the end of a day of frowns and humours, stretch far away in still and lucid air, their bases lost in blue, making the world immense, as if it were to be thus for ever and the gods to walk again.

The cliffs that hold the moon imprisoned in their clefts and lure the mind to desire useless things.

The flocks that go down into the sea or behind the mountains, and thrill the heart with adventurousness and yet never move it to an adventure, but rather persuade us to care greatly for nothing except to muse and mesmerise ourselves with that old song—

> "I did but see her passing by,
> And yet I love her till I die."

The parcels of aerial gold which at sunset make one canopy as of a golden-foliaged tree planted over the world. The night does not believe that they were ever there.

Those caravans that go down the blue precipices of night intently; those dragons, lean and black, that prepare the dawn and ruin the morning star.

They change, they tarry, they travel far, they pass away, they dissolve, they cannot die. Up there, do they think, or do they watch, or do they simply act? and is it pleasant simply to act? Have all the sunsets and dawns and thunderstorms done nothing for them? I suppose that up there also nothing matters but eternity; that up there also they know nothing of eternity.

See also Jefferies, *The Breeze on Beachy Head* and *Sea, Sky and Down.*

WALTER RAYMOND

THE mist had almost melted away. The fine rain had ceased to fall. Distant trees, diminishing in perspective along the hedgerows, had come dimly into view. A wood on the slope of a hillside stood out dark and mysterious against the fainter outline of a range of mountains beyond. The sun, peering softly through a transparent haze, permeated the whole atmosphere with a golden light, gentle and diffused. It glistened on the wet leaves of the elm and endowed with a new grace the dripping meadow-sweet in the ditch. It lit a million jewels on leaf and grass, heightening the purple on the bramble stem, and bid the virgin shell-like buds of the wild rose unfold and blush. Everywhere its touch was magic, adding an unknown glory to stalk and blade or any commonest thing that lives and grows, shedding new beauty, mystic, infinite, Divine, for the eternal enlightenment of all things that see. From the clear transcendent blue above the cloud an unseen lark poured forth his song.

Whilst the wandering spirit of the man had been absent in his dream, living creatures familiar to tree

After the Rain. This extract is from *A Wayfaring Soul*, first published in 1913.

and hedge ventured from their secret haunts. Impossible that they could have failed to see him, yet they had drawn quite near. Seeing him so peaceable and still, they summoned courage to dismiss their habitual fear of man, and, thus assured, so slight a movement as the raising of his head gave them no alarm. They merely stood alert and watched.

Rabbits of all ages, ascending the complete gamut of prolific spring, from the very young taking the air on their mountain of earth at the mouth of their cavern to the ancient doe that nibbled milky thistles crisp with dew, had come from their burrow amongst the roots of an oak.

Beside the narrow gutter, only one shovel wide, that carried the rain across the sward between the highway and the ditch was a veteran lifted erect. Solemn as a councillor, who has risen to speak having nothing to say, he stared and stared. More wise than he, no utterance of nothing parted his lips. He gravely stroked his cheek, struck a bead of moisture from his whisker, but could make nothing of so strange a visitor. Once he started as if to run, but overcoming his timidity remained motionless and stared again.

The wayfarer stared in return until gradually the solemn face seemed in some way to take on the countenance of a man—a man in the becoming, finding no wisdom but in fears and before a soul had brought discernment of any safety except in flight.

"They are no more than that," he said.

No utterance of nothing. The councillor would have spoken a series of "*nothings.*"

And lo! of a sudden the doe amongst the thistles made a frantic rush. The thistles were in commotion like the masts of boats when a wave dashes in amongst moorings. She turned—rushed again—and, as she turned more quickly still, he caught sight of a gleam of red amongst the quivering grasses. The red doubled into the road. But the mother was in pursuit, and when they turned again he saw the white throat of a stoat. And she charged the enemy and drove him, and made him twist and run for his life, until at last, in terror of her fury, he took refuge in the hedge. For a brief summer the spirit of maternity had given her courage to withstand her deadly foe.

"They are one with us—and sometimes better," said the man with bitterness. For often he had been angry with his fellow-man, and had not walked off all the rancour after so many miles. It was but momentary. None could nurse ill-will on such a morning when all Life was glad because the earth was fresh.

Thrushes light of wing passed to and fro, carrying worms to their nests amongst the hedgerow boughs. Sparrows dropped from the trees to flutter and splash in the silver pool by the ruts. A squirrel leapt upon the overhanging branch and looked down upon this visitor, bright-eyed and merry, for the time was too young to be thinking of a hoard.

On the post of a rail by the trunk of the elm a robin perched. Right and left he scanned the man, first with one eye then with the other. He jerked his body as if impatient with an intruder. Suddenly the bird threw back his head and cast at him a brief

fragment of song, a pittance of melody to a hungry soul in need of alms. To see the throb of it touched the heart of the wayfarer, though the utterance might have passed unheeded. He was weary, uncertain and heavily oppressed. A kindred throb clutched at his own throat. He could almost have wept.

For the bird had spoken without words, finding a self-expression humble and complete when the man had none. Little more than a stave, and scarcely music after all, those hurried tremulous notes awakened a responsive thrill in a soul attuned but mute. Emotion had made the wayfarer receptive. There came an answer quivering amongst his heart-strings, like the sympathetic murmur of a well-strung viol. He was no longer alone.

Within his bosom stirred a tenderness for everything that moves. He and all living creatures proved themselves akin. Sudden as the leaping of a trout from the depths of a pool, out of the obscurities of his memory sprang a half-forgotten rhyme—a fragment of a lay, that he had once known to the letter, and at times repeated for the sake of a haunting rhythm that awakened pleasurable emotion in his mind. It had never taken root in his understanding. Now it came like the cry of a brother soul, and he said it over, again and again, to the comfort of his heart:

> " He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

He prayeth best, etc. S. T. Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*, Part VII.

In the clearer light of a sublime truth everything became glorified. Even the humblest form put on a transcendent beauty, being equal with all others as a creation of the Supreme. Nothing appeared mean or small. The more unpretending the creature the more perfectly is fulfilled its destiny. These humble things obeyed God more implicitly than the man who looked down on them.

Unattractive lives, that hitherto had appeared awkward, ugly, even repulsive, no longer repelled him.

Forcing a tedious way amongst the grass at his feet, and stumbling over the rough ground, toiled a beetle, black and shining as jet, instinct-driven in quest of the only love he was ever to know. He also an unwearying pilgrim in obedience to Life's behest.

A dark and mottled toad had started on a journey across the yellow road. Dull-eyed and evil-looking in the shadow, he crawled up the incline and gained the light, to shine like polished tortoise-shell in a rim of gold.

A viper came gliding from a bed of nettles that covered a heap of stones. Innocent of malice, he stretched his diamond-patterned length upon a mole-hill, where the promise of a noon-day sunlight was just beginning to be felt. What need had he of venom if only he might be left in peace?

A great hope sprang up within the breast of the wayfarer.

All were beautiful and all was one.

From field and hedgerow came a constant symphony of intermittent sounds, as the dragon-fly sped by or the humble-bee visited the chambers of the foxglove. The continuous murmur lulled him into a strange dream.

Free from wayfaring he listened from above, and all the manifold activities of Life on earth became blended into one great unison, like the humming of innumerable bees in a prairie of clover-heads. And, like a melody, breathed through a single reed, a voice spoke within his heart:

"No attribute possessed by any living thing lies beyond the larger consciousness of man, and all consciousness is for ever growing into a knowledge of the infinite unfolding."

Lulled beyond dreaming the thoughts of the wayfarer sank to rest, and his soul lay still to bask in the gentle comfort of the growing light.

Symphony. Harmony of sounds.

The reader who has enjoyed this selection should read also Jefferies' *Story of My Heart*, ch. ii.

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

SHELLEY.

THE PAGEANT OF SUMMER

RICHARD JEFFERIES

I

GREEN rushes, long and thick, standing up above the edge of the ditch, told the hour of the year as distinctly as the shadow on the dial the hour of the day. Green and thick and sappy to the touch, they felt like summer, soft and elastic, as if full of life, mere rushes though they were. On the fingers they left a green scent; rushes have a separate scent of green, so, too, have ferns, very different to that of grass or leaves. Rising from brown sheaths, the tall stems enlarged a little in the middle, like classical columns, and heavy with their sap and freshness, leaned against the hawthorn sprays. From the earth they had drawn its moisture, and made the ditch dry; some of the sweetness of the air had entered into their fibres, and the rushes—the common rushes—were full of beautiful summer. The white pollen of early grasses growing on the edge was dusted from them each time the hawthorn boughs were shaken by a thrush. These lower sprays came down in among the grass, and leaves and grass-blades touched. Smooth round stems of

The Pageant of Summer. From Jefferies' *The Life of the Fields*, published 1884.

angelica, big as a gun-barrel, hollow and strong, stood on the slope of the mound, their tiers of well-balanced branches rising like those of a tree. Such a sturdy growth pushed back the ranks of hedge parsley in full white flower, which blocked every avenue and winding bird's-path of the bank. But the "gix," or wild parsnip, reached already high above both, and would rear its fluted stalk, joint on joint, till it could face a man. Trees they were to the lesser birds, not even bending if perched on; but though so stout, the birds did not place their nests on or against them. Something in the odour of these umbelliferous plants, perhaps, is not quite liked; if brushed or bruised they give out a bitter greenish scent. Under their cover, well shaded and hidden, birds build, but not against or on the stems, though they will affix their nests to much less certain supports. With the grasses that overhung the edge, with the rushes in the ditch itself, and these great plants on the mound, the whole hedge was wrapped and thickened. No cunning of glance could see through it; it would have needed a ladder to help any one look over.

It was between the may and the June roses. The may-bloom had fallen, and among the hawthorn boughs were the little green bunches that would feed the redwings in autumn. High up the briars had climbed, straight and towering while there was a thorn, or an ash sapling, or a yellow-green willow to uphold them, and then curving over towards the meadow. The buds were on them, but not yet open; it was between the may and the rose.

As the wind, wandering over the sea, takes from each wave an invisible portion, and brings to those on shore the ethereal essence of ocean, so the air lingering among the woods and hedges—green waves and billows—became full of fine atoms of summer. Swept from notched hawthorn leaves, broad-topped oak-leaves, narrow ash sprays and oval willows; from vast elm cliffs and sharp-taloned brambles under; brushed from the waving grasses and stiffening corn, the dust of the sunshine was borne along and breathed. Steeped in flower and pollen to the music of bees and birds, the stream of the atmosphere became a living thing. It was life to breathe it, for the air itself was life. The strength of the earth went up through the leaves into the wind. Fed thus on the food of the Immortals, the heart opened to the width and depth of the summer—to the broad horizon afar, down to the minutest creature in the grass, up to the highest swallow. Winter shows us Matter in its dead form, like the Primary rocks, like granite and basalt—clear but cold and frozen crystal. Summer shows us Matter changing into life, sap rising from the earth through a million tubes, the alchemic power of light entering the solid oak; and see! it bursts forth in countless leaves. Living things leap in the grass, living things drift upon the air, living things are coming forth to breathe in every hawthorn bush. No longer does the immense weight of Matter—the dead,

Alchemic. Chemical, possibly also with the old idea of alchemy as a means of changing baser metals, etc., to higher and more valuable forms.

the crystallised—press ponderously on the thinking mind. The whole office of Matter is to feed life—to feed the green rushes, and the roses that are about to be; to feed the swallows above, and us that wander beneath them. So much greater is this green and common rush than all the Alps.

Fanning so swiftly, the wasp's wings are but just visible as he passes; did he pause, the light would be apparent through their texture. On the wings of the dragon-fly as he hovers an instant before he darts there is a prismatic gleam. These wing textures are even more delicate than the minute filaments on a swallow's quill, more delicate than the pollen of a flower. They are formed of matter indeed, but how exquisitely it is resolved into the means and organs of life! Though not often consciously recognised, perhaps this is the great pleasure of summer, to watch the earth, the dead particles, resolving themselves into the living case of life, to see the seed-leaf push aside the clod and become by degrees the perfumed flower. From the tiny mottled egg come the wings that by-and-by shall pass the immense sea. It is in this marvellous transformation of clods and cold matter into living things that the joy and the hope of summer reside. Every blade of grass, each leaf, each separate floret and petal, is an inscription speaking of hope. Consider the grasses and the oaks, the swallows, the sweet blue butterfly—they are one and all a sign and token showing before our eyes earth made into life. So that my hope becomes as broad as the horizon afar, reiterated by every leaf, sung on

every bough, reflected in the gleam of every flower. There is so much for us yet to come, so much to be gathered and enjoyed. Not for you and me, now, but for our race, who will ultimately use this magical secret for their happiness. Earth holds secrets enough to give them the life of the fabled Immortals. My heart is fixed firm and stable in the belief that ultimately the sunshine and the summer, the flowers and the azure sky, shall become, as it were, interwoven into man's existence. He shall take from all their beauty and enjoy their glory. Hence it is that a flower is to me so much more than stalk and petals. When I look in the glass I see that every line in my face means pessimism; but in spite of my face—that is my experience—I remain an optimist. Time with an unsteady hand has etched thin crooked lines, and, deepening the hollows, has cast the original expression into shadow. Pain and sorrow flow over us with little ceasing, as the sea-hoofs beat on the beach. Let us not look at ourselves but onwards, and take strength from the leaf and the signs of the field. He is indeed despicable who cannot look onwards to the ideal life of man. Not to do so is to deny our birthright of mind.

The long grass flowing towards the hedge has reared in a wave against it. Along the hedge it is higher and greener, and rustles into the very bushes. There is a mark only now where the footpath was; it passed close to the hedge, but its place is traceable only as a groove in the sorrel and seed tops. Though it has quite filled the path, the grass there cannot

send its tops so high; it has left a winding crease. By the hedge here stands a moss-grown willow, and its slender branches extend over the sward. Beyond it is an oak, just apart from the bushes; then the ground gently rises, and an ancient pollard ash, hollow and black inside, guards an open gateway like a low tower. The different tone of green shows that the hedge is there of nut-trees; but one great hawthorn spreads out in a semicircle, roofing the grass which is yet more verdant in the still pool (as it were) under it. Next a corner, more oaks, and a chestnut in bloom. Returning to this spot an old apple tree stands right out in the meadow like an island. There seemed just now the tiniest twinkle of movement by the rushes, but it was lost among the hedge parsley. Among the grey leaves of the willow there is another flit of motion; and visible now against the sky there is a little brown bird, not to be distinguished at the moment from the many other little brown birds that are known to be about. He got up into the willow from the hedge parsley somehow, without being seen to climb or fly. Suddenly he crosses to the tops of the hawthorn and immediately flings himself up into the air a yard or two, his wings and ruffled crest making a ragged outline; jerk, jerk, jerk, as if it were with the utmost difficulty he could keep even at that height. He scolds, and twitters, and chirps, and all at once sinks like a stone into the hedge and out of sight as a stone into a pond. It is a whitethroat; his nest is deep in the parsley and nettles. Presently he will go out to the island apple tree and back again in

a minute or two; the pair of them are so fond of each other's affectionate company they cannot remain apart.

Watching the line of the hedge, about every two minutes, either near at hand or yonder a bird darts out just at the level of the grass, hovers a second with labouring wings, and returns as swiftly to the cover. Sometimes it is a fly-catcher, sometimes a greenfinch, or chaffinch, now and then a robin, in one place a shrike, perhaps another is a redstart. They are fly-fishing all of them, seizing insects from the sorrel tips and grass, as the kingfisher takes a roach from the water. A blackbird slips up into the oak and a dove descends in the corner by the chestnut tree. But these are not visible together, only one at a time and with intervals. The larger part of the life of the hedge is out of sight. All the thrush-fledglings, the young blackbirds, and finches are hidden, most of them on the mound among the ivy, and parsley, and rough grasses, protected too by a roof of brambles. The nests that still have eggs are not, like the nests of the early days of April, easily found; they are deep down in the tangled herbage by the shore of the ditch, or far inside the thorny thickets which then looked mere bushes, and are now so broad. Landrails are running in the grass concealed as a man would be in a wood; they have nests and eggs on the ground for which you may search in vain till the mowers come.

Up in the corner a fragment of white fur and marks of scratching show where a doe has been preparing

for a litter. Some well-trodden runs lead from mound to mound; they are sandy near the hedge where the particles have been carried out adhering to the rabbits' feet and fur. A crow rises lazily from the upper end of the field, and perches in the chestnut. His presence, too, was unsuspected. He is there by far too frequently. At this season the crows are always in the mowing-grass, searching about, stalking in winding tracks from furrow to furrow, picking up an egg here and a foolish fledgling that has wandered from the mound yonder. Very likely there may be a moorhen or two slipping about under cover of the long grass; thus hidden, they can leave the shelter of the flags and wander a distance from the brook. So that beneath the surface of the grass and under the screen of the leaves there are ten times more birds than are seen.

Besides the singing and calling, there is a peculiar sound which is only heard in summer. Waiting quietly to discover what birds are about, I become aware of a sound in the very air. It is not the midsummer hum which will soon be heard over the heated hay in the valley and over the cooler hills alike. It is not enough to be called a hum, and does but just tremble at the extreme edge of hearing. If the branches wave and rustle they overbear it; the buzz of a passing bee is so much louder it overcomes all of it that is in the whole field. I cannot define it, except by calling the hours of winter to mind—they are silent; you hear a branch crack or creak as it rubs another in the wood, you hear the hoar-

frost crunch on the grass beneath your feet, but the air is without sound in itself. The sound of summer is everywhere—in the passing breeze, in the hedge, in the broad branching trees, in the grass as it swings; all the myriad particles that together make the summer are in motion. The sap moves in the trees, the pollen is pushed out from grass and flower, and yet again these acres and acres of leaves and square miles of grass blades—for they would cover acres and square miles if reckoned edge to edge—are drawing their strength from the atmosphere. Exceedingly minute as these vibrations must be, their numbers perhaps may give them a volume almost reaching in the aggregate to the power of the ear. Besides the quivering leaf, the swinging grass, the fluttering bird's wing, and the thousand oval membranes which innumerable insects whirl about, a faint resonance seems to come from the very earth itself. The fervour of the sunbeams descending in a tidal flood rings on the strung harp of earth. It is this exquisite undertone, heard and yet unheard, which brings the mind into sweet accordance with the wonderful instrument of nature.

By the apple tree there is a low bank, where the grass is less tall and admits the heat direct to the ground; here there are blue flowers—bluer than the wings of my favourite butterflies—with white centres—the lovely bird's-eyes, or veronica. The violet and cowslip, bluebell and rose, are known to thousands; the veronica is overlooked. The ploughboys know it, and the wayside children, the mower and those

who linger in fields, but few else. Brightly blue and surrounded by greenest grass, imbedded in and all the more blue for the shadow of the grass, these growing butterflies' wings draw to themselves the sun. From this island I look down into the depth of the grasses. Red sorrel spires—deep drinkers of reddest sun wine—stand the boldest, and in their numbers threaten the buttercups. To these in the distance they give the gipsy-gold tint—the reflection of fire on plates of the precious metal. It will show even on a ring by firelight; blood in the gold, they say. Gather the open marguerite daisies, and they seem large—so wide a disc, such fingers of rays; but in the grass their size is toned by so much green. Clover heads of honey lurk in the bunches and by the hidden footpath. Like clubs from Polynesia the tips of the grasses are varied in shape: some tend to a point—the foxtails—some are hard and cylindrical; others, avoiding the club shape, put forth the slenderest branches with fruit of seed at the ends, which tremble as the air goes by. Their stalks are ripening and becoming of the colour of hay while yet the long blades remain green.

Each kind is repeated a hundred times, the foxtails are succeeded by foxtails, the narrow blades by narrow blades, but never become monotonous; sorrel stands by sorrel, daisy flowers by daisy. This bed of veronica at the foot of the ancient apple has a whole handful of flowers and yet they do not weary the eye. Oak follows oak and elm ranks with elm, but the woodlands are pleasant; however many times re-

duplicated, their beauty only increases. So, too, the summer days; the sun rises on the same grasses and green hedges, there is the same blue sky, but did we ever have enough of them? No, not in a hundred years! There seems always a depth, somewhere, unexplored, a thicket that has not been seen through, a corner full of ferns, a quaint old hollow tree, which may give us something. Bees go by me as I stand under the apple, but they pass on for the most part bound on a long journey, across to the clover fields or up to the thyme lands; only a few go down into the mowing-grass. The hive bees are the most impatient of insects; they cannot bear to entangle their wings beating against grasses or boughs. Not one will enter a hedge. They like an open and level surface, places cropped by sheep, the sward by the roadside, fields of clover, where the flower is not deep under grass.

II

It is the patient humble-bee that goes down into the forest of the mowing-grass. If entangled, the humble-bee climbs up a sorrel stem and takes wing, without any sign of annoyance. His broad back with tawny bar buoyantly glides over the golden buttercups. He hums to himself as he goes, so happy is he. He knows no skep, no cunning work in glass receives his labour, no artificial saccharine aids him when the beams of the sun are cold, there is no step to his house that he may alight in comfort; the way

Skep. Straw or rush beehive.

is not made clear for him that he may start straight for the flowers, nor are any sown for him. He has no shelter if the storm descends suddenly; he has no dome of twisted straw well thatched and tiled to retreat to. The butcher-bird, with a beak like a crooked iron nail, drives him to the ground, and leaves him pierced with a thorn; but no hail of shot revenges his tortures. The grass stiffens at nightfall (in autumn), and he must creep where he may, if possibly he may escape the frost. No one cares for the humble-bee. But down to the flowering nettle in the mossy-sided ditch, up into the tall elm, winding in and out and round the branched buttercups, along the banks of the brook, far inside the deepest wood, away he wanders and despises nothing. His nest is under the rough grasses and the mosses of the mound, a mere tunnel beneath the fibres and matted surface. The hawthorn overhangs it, the fern grows by, red mice rustle past.

It thunders, and the great oak trembles; the heavy rain drops through the treble roof of oak and hawthorn and fern. Under the arched branches the lightning plays along, swiftly to and fro, or seems to, like the swish of a whip, a yellowish-red against the green; a boom! a crackle as if a tree fell from the sky. The thick grasses are bowed, the white florets of the wild parsley are beaten down, the rain hurls itself, and suddenly a fierce blast tears the green oak leaves and whirls them out into the fields; but the humble-bee's home, under moss and matted fibres, remains uninjured. His house at the root of the

king of trees, like a cave in the rock, is safe. The storm passes and the sun comes out, the air is the sweeter and the richer for the rain, like verses with a rhyme; there will be more honey in the flowers. Humble he is, but wild; always in the field, the wood; always by the banks and thickets; always wild and humming to his flowers. Therefore I like the humble-bee, being, at heart at least, for ever roaming among the woodlands and the hills and by the brooks. In such quick summer storms the lightning gives the impression of being far more dangerous than the zigzag paths traced on the autumn sky. The electric cloud seems almost level with the ground and the livid flame to rush to and fro beneath the boughs as the little bats do in the evening.

Caught by such a cloud, I have stayed under thick larches at the edge of plantations. They are no shelter, but conceal one perfectly. The wood-pigeons come home to their nest trees; in larches they seem to have permanent nests, almost like rooks. Kestrels, too, come home to the wood. Pheasants crow, but not from fear—from defiance; in fear they scream. The boom startles them, and they instantly defy the sky. The rabbits quietly feed on out in the field between the thistles and rushes that so often grow in woodside pastures, quietly hopping to their favourite places, utterly heedless how heavy the echoes may be in the hollows of the wooded hills. Till the rain comes they take no heed whatever, but then make for shelter. Blackbirds often make a good deal of noise; but the soft turtle-doves coo gently, let the lightning be as

savage as it will. Nothing has the least fear. Man alone, more senseless than a pigeon, put a god in vapour; and to this day, though the printing press has set a foot on every threshold, numbers bow the knee when they hear the roar the timid dove does not heed. So trustful are the doves, the squirrels, the birds of the branches, and the creatures of the field. Under their tuition let us rid ourselves of mental terrors, and face death itself as calmly as they do the livid lightning; so trustful and so content with their fate, resting in themselves and unappalled. If but by reason and will I could reach the godlike calm and courage of what we so thoughtfully call the timid turtle-dove, I should lead a nearly perfect life.

The bark of the ancient apple tree under which I have been standing is shrunken like iron which has been heated and let cool round the rim of a wheel. For a hundred years the horses have rubbed against it while feeding in the aftermath. The scales of the bark are gone or smoothed down and level, so that insects have no hiding-place. There are no crevices for them, the horsehairs that are caught anywhere have been carried away by birds for their nests. The trunk is smooth and columnar, hard as iron. A hundred times the mowing-grass has grown up around it, the birds have built their nests, the butterflies fluttered by, and the acorns dropped from the oaks. It is a long, long time, counted by artificial hours or by the seasons, but it is longer still in another way.

Aftermath. Second crop of grass mown in the same year as the first.

The greenfinch in the hawthorn yonder has been there since I came out, and all the time has been happily talking to his love. He has left the hawthorn indeed, but only for a minute or two, to fetch a few seeds, and comes back each time more full of song-talk than ever. He notes no slow movement of the oak's shadow on the grass; it is nothing to him and his lady dear that the sun, as seen from his nest, is crossing from one great bough of the oak to another. The dew even in the deepest and most tangled grass has long since been dried, and some of the flowers that close at noon will shortly fold their petals. The morning airs, which breathe so sweetly, come less and less frequently as the heat increases. Vanishing from the sky, the last fragments of cloud have left an untarnished azure. Many times the bees have returned to their hives, and thus the index of the day advances. It is nothing to the greenfinches; all their thoughts are in their song-talk. The sunny moment is to them all in all. So deeply are they rapt in it that they do not know whether it is a moment or a year. There is no clock for feeling, for joy, for love.

And with all their motions and stepping from bough to bough, they are not restless; they have so much time, you see. So, too, the whitethroat in the wild parsley; so, too, the thrush that just now peered out and partly fluttered his wings as he stood to look. A butterfly comes and stays on a leaf—a leaf much warmed by the sun—and shuts his wings. In a minute he opens them, shuts them again, half wheels round, and by-and-by—just when he chooses, and not before—

floats away. The flowers open, and remain open for hours, to the sun. Hastelessness is the only word one can make up to describe it; there is much rest, but no haste. Each moment, as with the greenfinches, is so full of life that it seems so long and so sufficient in itself. Not only the days, but life itself lengthens in summer. I would spread abroad my arms and gather more of it to me, could I do so.

All the procession of living and growing things passes. The grass stands up taller and still taller, the sheaths open, and the stalk arises, the pollen clings till the breeze sweeps it. The bees rush past, and the resolute wasps; the humble-bees, whose weight swings them along. About the oaks and maples the brown chafers swarm, and the fern-owls at dusk, and the blackbirds and jays by day, cannot reduce their legions while they last. Yellow butterflies, and white, broad red admirals, and sweet blues; think of the kingdom of flowers which is theirs! Heavy moths burring at the edge of the copse; green, and red, and gold flies; gnats, like smoke, around the tree-tops; midges so thick over the brook, as if you could haul a netful; tiny leaping creatures in the grass; bronze beetles across the path; blue dragon-flies pondering on cool leaves of water-plantain. Blue jays flitting, a magpie drooping across from elm to elm; young rooks that have escaped the hostile shot blundering up into the branches; missel thrushes leading their fledglings, already strong on the wing, from field to field. An egg here on the sward dropped by a starling; a red ladybird creeping, tortoise-like,

up a green fern frond. Finches undulating through the air, shooting themselves with closed wings, and linnets happy with their young.

Golden dandelion discs—gold and orange—of a hue more beautiful, I think, than the higher and more visible buttercup. A blackbird, gleaming, so black is he, splashing in the runlet of water across the gateway. A ruddy kingfisher swiftly drawing himself, as you might draw a stroke with a pencil, over the surface of the yellow buttercups, and away above the hedge. Hart's-tongue fern, thick with green, so green as to be thick with its colour, deep in the ditch under the shady hazel boughs. White meadow-sweet lifting its tiny florets, and black-flowered sedges. You must push through the reed grass to find the sword-flags; the stout willow-herbs will not be trampled down, but resist the foot like underwood. Pink lychnis flowers behind the withy stoles, and little black moorhens swim away, as you gather it, after their mother, who has dived under the water-grass, and broken the smooth surface of the duckweed. Yellow loosestrife is rising, thick comfrey stands at the very edge; the sandpipers run where the shore is free from bushes. Back by the underwood the prickly and repellent brambles will presently present us with fruit. For the squirrels the nuts are forming, green beechmast is there—green wedges under the spray;

Lychnis flowers. Campions.

Withy stoles. Willow stems. A stole or stolon is a trailing branch disposed to take root again at the end or at the joints.

up in the oaks the small knots, like bark rolled up in a dot, will be acorns. Purple vetches along the mounds, yellow lotus where the grass is shorter and orchis succeeds to orchis. As I write them, so these things come—not set in gradation, but like the broadcast flowers in the mowing-grass.

Now follows the gorse, and the pink rest-harrow, and the sweet lady's-bedstraw, set as it were in the midst of a little thorn-bush. The broad repetition of the yellow clover is not to be written; acre upon acre, and not one spot of green, as if all the green had been planed away, leaving only the flowers to which the bees come by the thousand from far and near. But one white campion stands in the midst of the lake of yellow. The field is scented as though a hundred hives of honey had been emptied on it. Along the mound by it the bluebells are seeding, the hedge has been cut and the ground is strewn with twigs. Among those seeding bluebells and dry twigs and mosses I think a titlark has his nest, as he stays all day there and in the oak over. The pale clear yellow of charlock, sharp and clear, promises the finches bushels of seed for their young. Under the scarlet of the poppies the larks run, and then for change of colour soar into the blue. Creamy honeysuckle on the hedge around the cornfield, buds of wild rose everywhere, but no sweet petal yet. Yonder, where the wheat can climb no higher up the slope, are the purple heath-bells, thyme and flitting stonechats.

The lone barn shut off by acres of barley is noisy with sparrows. It is their city, and there is a nest in

every crevice, almost under every tile. Sometimes the partridges run between the ricks, and when the bats come out of the roof, leverets play in the waggon-track. At even a fern-owl beats by, passing close to the eaves whence the moths issue. On the narrow waggon-track which descends along a coombe and is worn in chalk, the heat pours down by day as if an invisible lens in the atmosphere focussed the sun's rays. Strong woody knapweed endures it, so does toadflax and pale blue scabious, and wild mignonette. The very sun of Spain burns and burns and ripens the wheat on the edge of the coombe, and will only let the spring moisten a yard or two around it; but there a few rushes have sprung, and in the water itself brooklime with blue flowers grows so thickly that nothing but a bird could find space to drink. So down again from this sun of Spain to woody coverts where the wild hops are blocking every avenue, and green-flowered bryony would fain climb to the trees; where grey-flecked ivy winds spirally about the red rugged bark of pines, where burdocks fight for the footpath, and teazle-heads look over the low hedges. Brake-fern rises five feet high; in some way woodpeckers are associated with brake, and there seem more of them where it flourishes. If you count the depth and strength of its roots in the loamy sand, add the thickness of its flattened stem, and the width of its branching fronds, you may say that it comes near to be a little tree. Beneath, where the ponds are, bushy mare's-tails grow, and on the moist banks jointed pewterwort; some of the broad bronze leaves

of water-weeds seem to try and conquer the pond and cover it so firmly that a wagtail may run on them. A white butterfly follows along the waggon-road, the pheasants slip away as quietly as the butterfly flies, but a jay screeches loudly and flutters in high rage to see us. Under an ancient garden wall among matted bines of trumpet convolvulus, there is a hedge-sparrow's nest overhung with ivy on which even now the last black berries cling.

There are minute white flowers on the top of the wall, out of reach, and lichen grows against it dried by the sun till it looks ready to crumble. By the gateway grows a thick bunch of meadow geranium, soon to flower; over the gate is the dusty highway road, quiet but dusty, dotted with the innumerable footmarks of a flock of sheep that has passed. The sound of their bleating still comes back, and the bees driven up by their feet have hardly had time to settle again on the white clover beginning to flower on the short roadside sward. All the hawthorn leaves and briar and bramble, the honeysuckle, too, is gritty with the dust that has been scattered upon it. But see—can it be? Stretch a hand high, quick, and reach it down; the first, the sweetest, the dearest rose of June. Not yet expected, for the time is between the may and the roses, least of all here in the hot and dusty highway; but it is found—the first rose of June.

Straight go the white petals to the heart; straight the mind's glance goes back to how many other pageants of summer in old times! When perchance

the sunny days were even more sunny; when the stilly oaks were full of mystery, lurking like the Druid's mistletoe in the midst of their mighty branches. A glamour in the heart came back to it again from every flower; as the sunshine was reflected from them so the feeling in the heart returned tenfold. To the dreamy summer haze love gave a deep enchantment, the colours were fairer, the blue more lovely in the lucid sky. Each leaf finer, and the gross earth enamelled beneath the feet. A sweet breath on the air, a soft warm hand in the touch of the sunshine, a glance in the gleam of the rippled waters, a whisper in the dance of the shadows. The ethereal haze lifted the heavy oaks and they were buoyant on the mead, the rugged bark was chastened and no longer rough, each slender flower beneath them again refined. There was a presence everywhere though unseen, on the open hills, and not shut out under the dark pines. Dear were the June roses then because for another gathered. Yet even dearer now with so many years as it were upon the petals; all the days that have been before, all the heart-throbs, all our hopes lie in this opened bud. Let not the eyes grow dim, look not back but forward; the soul must uphold itself like the sun. Let us labour to make the heart grow larger as we become older, as the spreading oak gives more shelter. That we could but take to the soul some of the greatness and the beauty of the summer!

Still the pageant moves. The song-talk of the finches rises and sinks like the tinkle of a waterfall.

The greenfinches have been by me all the while. A bullfinch pipes now and then further up the hedge where the brambles and thorns are thickest. Boldest of birds to look at, he is always in hiding. The shrill tone of a goldfinch came just now from the ash branches, but he has gone on. Every four or five minutes a chaffinch sings close by, and another fills the interval near the gateway. There are linnets somewhere, but I cannot from the old apple tree fix their exact place. Thrushes have sung and ceased; they will begin again in ten minutes. The blackbirds do not cease; the note uttered by a blackbird in the oak yonder before it can drop is taken up by a second near the top of the field, and ere it falls is caught by a third on the left-hand side. From one of the topmost boughs of an elm there fell the song of a willow warbler for awhile; one of the least of birds, he often seeks the highest branches of the highest tree.

A yellowhammer has just flown from a bare branch in the gateway, where he has been perched and singing a full hour. Presently he will commence again, and as the sun declines will sing him to the horizon, and then again sing till nearly dusk. The yellowhammer is almost the longest of all the singers; he sits and sits and has no inclination to move. In the spring he sings, in the summer he sings, and he continues when the last sheaves are being carried from the wheat field. The redstart yonder has given forth a few notes, the whitethroat flings himself into the air at short intervals and chatters, the shrike calls sharp and determined, faint but shrill calls descend from the

swifts in the air. These descend, but the twittering notes of the swallows do not reach so far—they are too high to-day. A cuckoo has called by the brook, and now fainter from a greater distance. That the titlarks are singing I know, but not within hearing from here; a dove, though, is audible, and a chiffchaff has twice passed. Afar beyond the oaks at the top of the field dark specks ascend from time to time, and after moving in wide circles for awhile descend again to the corn. These must be larks; but their notes are not powerful enough to reach me, though they would were it not for the song in the hedges, the hum of innumerable insects, and the ceaseless "crake, crake" of landrails. There are at least two landrails in the mowing-grass; one of them just now seemed coming straight towards the apple tree, and I expected in a minute to see the grass move, when the bird turned aside and entered the tufts and wild parsley by the hedge. Thence the call has come without a moment's pause, "crake, crake," till the thick hedge seems filled with it. Tits have visited the apple tree over my head, a wren has sung in the willow or rather on a dead branch projecting lower down than the leafy boughs, and a robin across under the elms in the opposite hedge. Elms are a favourite tree of robins—not the upper branches, but those that grow down the trunk, and are the first to have leaves in spring.

The yellowhammer is the most persistent individually, but I think the blackbirds when listened to are the masters of the fields. Before one can finish another

begins, like the summer ripples succeeding behind each other, so that the melodious sound merely changes its position. Now here, now in the corner, then across the field, again in the distant copse, where it seems about to sink, when it rises again almost at hand. Like a great human artist, the blackbird makes no effort, being fully conscious that his liquid tone cannot be matched. He utters a few delicious notes, and carelessly quits the green stage of the oak till it pleases him to sing again. Without the blackbird, in whose throat the sweetness of the green fields dwells, the days would be only partly summer. Without the violet all the bluebells and cowslips could not make a spring, and without the blackbird, even the nightingale would be but half welcome. It is not yet noon, these songs have been ceaseless since dawn; this evening, after the yellowhammer has sung the sun down, when the moon rises and the faint stars appear, still the cuckoo will call, and the grasshopper lark, the landrail's "crake, crake" will echo from the mound, a warbler or a blackcap will utter his notes, and even at the darkest of the summer night the swallows will hardly sleep in their nests. As the morning sky grows blue, an hour before the sun, up will rise the larks singing and audible now, the cuckoo will recommence, and the swallows will start again on their tireless journey. So that the songs of the summer birds are as ceaseless as the sound of the waterfall which plays day and night.

I cannot leave it; I must stay under the old tree in the midst of the long grass. the luxury of the leaves,

and the song in the very air. I seem as if I could feel all the glowing life the sunshine gives and the south wind calls to being. The endless grass, the endless leaves, the immense strength of the oak expanding, the unalloyed joy of finch and blackbird; from all of them I receive a little. Each gives me something of the pure joy they gather for themselves. In the blackbird's melody one note is mine; in the dance of the leaf shadows the formed maze is for me, though the motion is theirs; the flowers with a thousand faces have collected the kisses of the morning. Feeling with them, I receive some, at least, of their fulness of life. Never could I have enough; never stay long enough—whether here or whether lying on the shorter sward under the sweeping and graceful birches, or on the thyme-scented hills. Hour after hour, and still not enough. Or walking the footpath was never long enough, or my strength sufficient to endure till the mind was weary. The exceeding beauty of the earth, in her splendour of life, yields a new thought with every petal. The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live, so that the longer we can stay among these things so much the more is snatched from inevitable Time. Let the shadow advance upon the dial—I can watch it with equanimity while it is there to be watched. It is only when the shadow is *not* there, when the clouds of winter cover it, that the dial is terrible. The invisible shadow goes on and steals from us But now, while I can see the shadow of the tree and watch it slowly gliding along the surface of the grass,

it is mine. These are the only hours that are not wasted—these hours that absorb the soul and fill it with beauty. This is real life, and all else is illusion, or mere endurance. Does this reverie of flowers and waterfall and song form an ideal, a human ideal, in the mind? It does; much the same ideal that Phidias sculptured of man and woman filled with a godlike sense of the violet fields of Greece, beautiful beyond thought, calm as my turtle-dove before the lurid lightning of the unknown. To be beautiful and to be calm, without mental fear, is the ideal of nature. If I cannot achieve it, at least I can think it.

Phidias. The most famous Athenian sculptor of the age of Pericles. He directed the construction of the buildings and other works with which Pericles beautified Athens. His most famous work was a statue of Athene.

See also this author's *Meadow Thoughts*, and Lowell's *My Garden Acquaintance.*

Day!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay—
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

ROBERT BROWNING.

MISS MITFORD

ANYBODY may be lost in a wood. It is well for me to have so good an excuse for my wanderings! for I am rather famous for such misadventures, and have sometimes been accused by my kindest friends of committing intentional blunders, and going astray out of malice prepense. To be sure, when in two successive rambles I contrived to get mazed on Burghfield Common, and bewildered in Kibe's Lane, those exploits did seem to overpass the common limits of stupidity. But in a wood, and a strange wood, a new place, a fresh country, untrodden ground beneath the feet, unknown landmarks before the eyes, wiser folks than I might require the silken clue of Rosamond, or the bag of ashes given to Finette Cendron (*Anglicè*

Lost and Found. This selection and the next are from Miss Mitford's *Our Village*, first published as Essays in the *London Magazine* between 1824 and 1832. The village described in this popular work is Three Mile Cross, on the highway between Reading and Basingstoke.

Malice prepense. With a deliberately evil intention.

Mazed. Bewildered, as if lost in a maze.

Rosamond. Rosamond Clifford or Fair Rosamond, the mistress of Henry II., who lived in a labyrinth at Woodstock, near Oxford, Henry finding his way to her bower by means of a silken clue.

Finette Cendron. In this earlier version of the Cinderella story the three daughters are deserted by their parents, but the youngest is provided by her fairy godmother with a bag of

Cinderella) by the good fairy her godmother, to help them home again. Now, my luck exceeded even hers of the Glass Slipper, for I found something not unlike the good fairy herself, in the pleasant earthly guise of an old friend. But I may as well begin my story.

About two years ago we had the misfortune to lose one of the most useful and popular inhabitants of our village, Mrs. Bond, the butter-woman. She—for although there was a very honest and hard-working Farmer Bond, who had the honour to be Mrs. Bond's husband, she was so completely the personage of the family that nobody ever thought of him—she lived on a small dairy-farm at the other side of the parish, where she had reared ten children in comfort and respectability, contriving in all years and in all seasons to look and to be flourishing, happy, and contented, and to drive her tilted cart twice a week into B., laden with the richest butter, the freshest eggs, and the finest poultry of the county. Never was market-woman so reliable as Mrs. Bond, so safe to deal with, or so pleasant to look at. She was a neat, comely woman of five-and-forty, or thereabout, with dark hair, laughing eyes, a bright smile, and a brighter complexion—red and white like a daisy. People used to say how pretty she must have been; but I think she was then in the prime of her good looks; just as

ashes, which serves as a clue to get them home again. Our modern version is based on Perrault's *Cendrillon*, and the glass slipper is due to a mistranslation or misreading of *pantoufle en vair* (a fur slipper) as *pantoufle en verre*.

a full-blown damask rose is more beautiful than the same flower in the bud.

Very pleasant she was to look at, and still pleasanter to talk to; she was so gentle, so cheerful, so respectful, and so kind. Everybody in the village loved Mrs. Bond. Even Lizzy and May, the two most aristocratical of its inhabitants, and the most tenacious of the distinctions of rank, would run to meet the butter-cart as if it were a carriage and four; a mark of preference which the good-humoured dairy-woman did not fail to acknowledge and confirm by gifts suited to their respective tastes—an occasional pitcher of butter-milk to May, and a stick with cherries tied round it to poor Lizzy.

Nor was Mrs. Bond's bounty confined to largesses of so suspicious a nature, as presents to the pets of a good customer. I have never known any human being more thoroughly and universally generous, more delicate in her little gifts, or with so entire an absence of design or artifice in her attentions. It was a prodigality of kindness that seemed never weary of well-doing. What posies of pinks and sweet-williams, backed by marjoram and rosemary, she used to carry to the two poor old ladies who lodged at the pastry-cook's at B.! What fagots of lilac and laburnum she would bring to deck the poor widow Hay's open

Lizzie and May. Lizzie was a carpenter's daughter, "the plaything and queen of the village, a child three years old, according to the register, but six in size and strength and intellect, in power and self will. . . . She has but one rival in her dominions, a certain white greyhound called Mayflower (*May*), much her friend."

hearth! What baskets of water-cresses, the brownest, the bitterest, and the crispest of the year, for our fair neighbour, the nymph of the shoe-shop, a delicate girl, who could only be tempted in to her breakfast by that pleasant herb! What pots of honey for John Brown's cough! What gooseberries and currants for the baker's little children! And as soon as her great vine ripened, what grapes for everybody! No wonder that when Mrs. Bond left the parish to occupy a larger farm in a distant county, her absence was felt as a misfortune by the whole village; that poor Lizzy inquired after her every day for a week; and that May watched for the tilted cart every Wednesday and Friday for a month or more.

I myself joined very heartily in the general lamentation. But time and habit reconcile us to most privations, and I must confess that, much as I liked her, I had nearly forgotten our good butterwoman, until an adventure which befell me last week placed me once more in the way of her ready kindness.

I was on a visit at a considerable distance from home, in one of the most retired parts of Oxfordshire. Nothing could be more beautiful than the situation, or less accessible; shut in amongst woody hills, remote from great towns, with deep chalky roads, almost impassable, and a broad bridgeless river, coming, as if to intercept your steps, whenever you did seem to have fallen into a beaten track. It was exactly the country and the season in which to wander about all day long.

Tilted. Covered with a hood or tilt.

One fair morning I set out on my accustomed ramble. The sun was intensely hot; the sky almost cloudless; I had climbed a long abrupt ascent, to enjoy the sight of the magnificent river, winding like a snake amidst the richly-clothed hills; the pretty village, with its tapering spire; and the universal freshness and brilliancy of the gay and smiling prospect—too gay, perhaps! I gazed till I became dazzled with the glare of the sunshine, oppressed by the very brightness, and turned into a beech-wood by the side of the road, to seek relief from the overpowering radiance. These beech-woods should rather be called coppices. They are cut down occasionally, and consist of long flexible stems, growing out of the old roots. But they are like no other coppices, or rather none other can be compared with them. The young beechen stems, perfectly free from underwood, go arching and intertwining overhead, forming a thousand mazy paths, covered by a natural trellis; the shining green leaves, just bursting from their golden sheaths, contrasting with the smooth silvery bark, shedding a cool green light around, and casting a thousand dancing shadows on the mossy, flowery path, pleasant to the eye and to the tread, a fit haunt for wood-nymph or fairy. There is always much of interest in the mystery of a wood; the uncertainty produced by the confined boundary; the objects which crowd together and prevent the eye from penetrating to any distance; the strange flickering mixture of shadow and sunshine, the sudden flight of birds—oh, it was enchanting! I

Coppice. A copse or thicket of brushwood.

wandered on, quite regardless of time or distance, now admiring the beautiful wood-sorrel which sprang up amongst the old roots—now plucking the fragrant woodruff—now trying to count the countless varieties of woodland-moss, till, at length, roused by my foot's catching in a rich trail of the white veined ivy, which crept, wreathing and interlaced, over the ground, I became aware that I was completely lost, had entirely forsaken all track, and out-travelled all landmarks. The wood was, I knew, extensive, and the ground so tumbled about, that every hundred yards presented some flowery slope or broken dell, which added greatly to the picturesqueness of the scenery, but much diminished my chance of discovery or extrication.

In this emergency I determined to proceed straight onward, trusting in this way to reach at last one side of the wood, although I could not at all guess which; and I was greatly solaced, after having walked about a quarter of a mile, to find myself crossed by a rude cart track; and still more delighted, on proceeding a short distance farther, to hear sounds of merriment and business; none of the softest, certainly, but which gave token of rustic habitation; and to emerge suddenly from the close wood, amongst an open grove of huge old trees, oaks, with their brown-plaited leaves, cherries, covered with snowy garlands, and beeches almost as gigantic as those of Windsor Park, contrasting, with their enormous trunks and majestic spread of bough, the light and flexible stems of the coppice I had left.

I had come out at one of the highest points of the

wood, and now stood on a platform overlooking a scene of extraordinary beauty. A little to the right, in a very narrow valley, stood an old farmhouse, with pointed roofs and porch and pinnacles, backed by a splendid orchard, which lay bathed in the sunshine, exhaling its fresh aromatic fragrance, all one flower; just under me was a strip of rich meadow land, through which a stream ran sparkling, and directly opposite a ridge of hanging coppices, surrounding and crowning, as it were, an immense old chalk-pit, which, overhung by bramble, ivy, and a hundred pendent weeds, irregular and weather-stained, had an air as venerable and romantic as some grey ruin. Seen in the gloom and stillness of evening, or by the pale glimpses of the moon, it would have required but little aid from the fancy to picture out the broken shafts and mouldering arches of some antique abbey. But, besides that daylight is the sworn enemy of such illusions, my attention was imperiously claimed by a reality of a very different kind. One of the gayest and noisiest operations of rural life—sheep-washing—was going on in the valley below—

> " the turmoil that unites
> Clamour of boys with innocent despites
> Of barking dogs, and bleatings from strange fear."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

All the inhabitants of the farm seemed assembled in the meadow. I counted a dozen, at least, of men and boys of all ages, from the stout, sunburnt, vigorous farmer of fifty, who presided over the operation,

The turmoil that unites, etc. See *River Duddon*, sonnet 23.

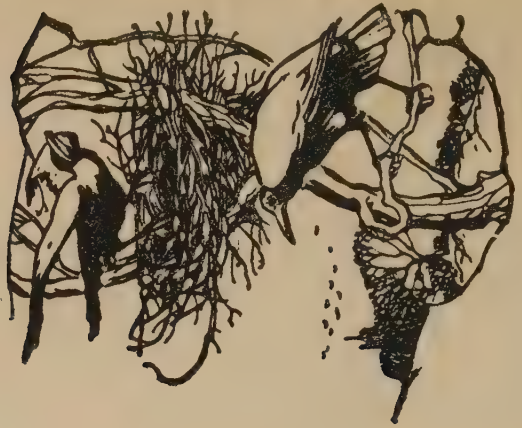
down to the eight-year-old urchin, who, screaming, running, and shaking his ineffectual stick after an eloped sheep, served as a sort of aide-de-camp to the sheep-dog. What a glorious scene of confusion it was! what shouting! what scuffling! what glee! Four or five young men, and one amazon of a barefooted girl, with her petticoats tucked up to her knees, stood in the water where it was pent between two hurdles, ducking, sousing, and holding down by main force, the poor, frightened, struggling sheep, who kicked, and plunged, and bleated, and butted, and, in spite of their imputed innocence, would certainly, in the ardour of self-defence, have committed half a dozen homicides, if their power had equalled their inclination. The rest of the party were fully occupied: some in conducting the purified sheep, who showed a strong disposition to go the wrong way, back to their quarters; others in leading the uncleansed part of the flock to their destined ablution, from which they also testified a very ardent and active desire to escape. Dogs, men, boys, and girls, were engaged in marshalling these double processions, the order of which was constantly interrupted by the outbreaking of some runaway sheep, who turned the march into a pursuit, to the momentary increase of the din which seemed already to have reached the highest possible pitch.

The only quiet persons in the field were a delicate child of nine years old and a blooming woman of forty-five—a comely, blooming woman, with dark hair, bright eyes, and a complexion like a daisy, who

stood watching the sheep-washers with the happiest smiles, and was evidently the mother of half the lads and lasses in the *mêlée*. It would be, and it was, no other than my friend Mrs. Bond, and resolving to make myself and my difficulties known to her, I scrambled down no very smooth or convenient path, and keeping a gate between me and the scene of action, contrived, after sundry efforts, to attract her attention.

Here, of course, my difficulties ceased. But if I were to tell how glad she was to see her old neighbour, how full of kind questions and of hospitable cares—how she would cut the great cake intended for the next day's sheep-shearing, would tap her two-year-old currant wine, would gather a whole bush of early honeysuckles, and finally would see me home herself, I being, as she observed, rather given to losing my way;—if I were to tell all these things, when should I have done? I will rather conclude in the words of an old French fairy tale:—"*Je crains déjà d'avoir abusé de la patience du lecteur. Je finis avant qu'il me dise de finir.*"

Je crains, etc. I fear that I have already abused my reader's patience. I will stop before he tells me to do so.



H. D. THOREAU

AFTER a still winter night I awoke with the impression that some question had been put to me, which I had been endeavouring in vain to answer in my sleep, as what—how—when—where? But there was dawning Nature, in whom all creatures live, looking in at my broad windows with serene and satisfied face, and no question on *her* lips. I awoke to an answered question, to Nature and daylight. The snow lying deep on the earth dotted with young pines, and the very slope of the hill on which my house is placed seemed to say, Forward! Nature puts no question, and answers none which we mortals ask. She has long ago taken her resolution. "O Prince, our eyes contemplate with admiration and transmit to the soul the wonderful and varied spectacle of this universe. The night veils without doubt a part of this glorious creation; but day comes to reveal to us this great work, which extends from earth even into the plains of the ether."

Then to my morning work. First I take an axe and pail and go in search of water, if that be not a

The Pond in Winter. One of the series of essays in which Thoreau describes his life in *Walden.* The pond is the Walden Pond.

dream. After a cold and snowy night it needed a divining rod to find it. Every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half, so that it will support the heaviest teams, and perchance the snow covers it to an equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field. Like the marmots in the surrounding hills, it closes its eyelids and becomes dormant for three months or more. Standing on the snow-covered plain, as if in a pasture amid the hills, I cut my way first through a foot of snow, and then a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlour of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer; there a perennial waveless serenity reigns as in the amber twilight sky, corresponding to the cool and even temperament of the inhabitants. Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.

Early in the morning, while all things are crisp with frost, men come with fishing reels and slender lunch, and let down their fine lines through the snowy field to take pickerel and perch; wild men, who instinctively follow other fashions and trust other authorities

Divining rod. The twig of hazel the water-diviner or water-seeker carries in his hand. It trembles when held over water.

Marmots. Small gregarious animals found in North America, which hibernate (become *dormant* or sleeping) during the winter months.

than their townsmen, and by their goings and comings stitch towns together in parts where else they would be ripped. They sit and eat their luncheon in stout fear-naughts on the dry oak leaves on the shore, as wise in natural lore as the citizen is in artificial. They never consulted with books, and know and can tell much less than they have done. The things which they practise are said not yet to be known. Here is one fishing for pickerel with grown perch for bait. You look into his pail with wonder as into a summer pond, as if he kept summer locked up at home, or knew where she had retreated. How, pray, did he get these in mid-winter? Oh, he got worms out of rotten logs since the ground froze, and so he caught them. His life itself passes deeper in Nature than the studies of the naturalist penetrate, himself a subject for the naturalist. The latter raises the moss and bark gently with his knife in search of insects; the former lays open logs to their core with his axe, and moss and bark fly far and wide. He gets his living by barking trees. Such a man has some right to fish, and I love to see Nature carried out in him. The perch swallows the grub-worm, the pickerel swallows the perch, and the fisherman swallows the pickerel; and so all the chinks in the scale of being are filled.

When I strolled around the pond in misty weather I was sometimes amused by the primitive mode which

Fear-naughts. Garments formed of a stout woollen cloth of great thickness.

Pickerel. Pike. Fishes which prey upon perch and other fresh-water fish.

some ruder fisherman had adopted. He would perhaps have placed alder branches over the narrow holes in the ice, which were four or five rods apart and an equal distance from the shore, and having fastened the end of the line to a stick to prevent its being pulled through, have passed the slack line over a twig of the alder, a foot or more above the ice, and tied a dry oak leaf to it, which, being pulled down, would show when he had a bite. These alders loomed through the mist at regular intervals as you walked half-way round the pond.

Ah, the pickerel of Walden! when I see them lying on the ice, or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice, making a little hole to admit the water, I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were fabulous fishes, they are so foreign to the streets, even to the woods, foreign as Arabia to our Concord life. They possess a quite dazzling and transcendent beauty which separates them by a wide interval from the cadaverous cod and haddock whose fame is trumpeted in our streets. They are not green like the pines, nor grey like the stones, nor blue like the sky; but they have, to my eyes, if possible, yet rarer colours, like flowers and precious stones, as if they were the pearls, the animalised *nuclei* or crystals of the Walden water. They, of course, are Walden all over and all through; are themselves small Waldens in the animal kingdom, Waldenses. It is surprising that they are caught here,—that in this deep and capacious spring, far beneath the rattling teams and chaises and tinkling

Concord. Thoreau's home in Massachusetts, twenty-three miles north-west of Boston.

sleighs that travel the Walden road, this great gold and emerald fish swims. I never chanced to see its kind in any market; it would be the cynosure of all eyes there. Easily, with a few convulsive quirks, they give up their watery ghosts, like a mortal translated before his time to the thin air of heaven.

As I was desirous to recover the long lost bottom of Walden Pond, I surveyed it carefully, before the ice broke up, early in '46, with compass and chain and sounding line. There have been many stories told about the bottom, or rather no bottom, of this pond, which certainly had no foundation for themselves. It is remarkable how long men will believe in the bottomlessness of a pond without taking the trouble to sound it. I have visited two such Bottomless Ponds in one walk in this neighbourhood. Many have believed that Walden reached quite through to the other side of the globe. Some who have lain flat on the ice for a long time, looking down through the illusive medium, perchance with watery eyes into the bargain, and driven to hasty conclusions by the fear of catching cold in their breasts, have seen vast holes "into which a load of hay might be driven," if there were anybody to drive it, the undoubted source of the Styx and entrance to the Infernal Regions from these parts. Others have gone down from the village with a "fifty-six" and a waggon load of

Cynosure. Centre of attraction.
Styx. A river in Hades, the "Infernal Regions."
Fifty-six. A weight of fifty-six pounds.

inch rope, but yet have failed to find any bottom; for while the " fifty-six " was resting by the way, they were paying out the rope in the vain attempt to fathom their truly immeasurable capacity for marvellousness. But I can assure my readers that Walden has a reasonably tight bottom at a not unreasonable, though at an unusual depth. I fathomed it easily with a cod-line and a stone weighing about a pound and a-half, and could tell accurately when the stone left the bottom, by having to pull so much harder before the water got underneath to help me. The greatest depth was exactly one hundred and two feet; to which may be added the five feet which it has risen since, making one hundred and seven. This is a remarkable depth for so small an area; yet not an inch of it can be spared by the imagination. What if all ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the mind of men? I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite, some ponds will be thought to be bottomless.

A factory owner, hearing what depth I had found, thought that it could not be true, for, judging from his acquaintance with dams, sand would not lie at so steep an angle. But the deepest ponds are not so deep in proportion to their area as most suppose, and, if drained, would not leave very remarkable valleys. They are not like cups between the hills; for this one, which is so unusually deep for its area, appears in a vertical section through its centre not deeper than a shallow plate. Most ponds, emptied, would leave a

meadow no more hollow than we frequently see. William Gilpin, who is so admirable in all that relates to landscapes, and usually so correct, standing at the head of Loch Fyne, in Scotland, which he describes as "a bay of salt water, sixty or seventy fathoms deep, four miles in breadth," and about fifty miles long, surrounded by mountains, observes, "If we could have seen it immediately after the diluvian crash, or whatever convulsion of Nature occasioned it, before the waters gushed in, what a horrid chasm it must have appeared!

> "'So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
> Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad, and deep,
> Capacious bed of waters.——'"

But if, using the shortest diameter of Loch Fyne, we apply these proportions to Walden, which, as we have seen, appears already in a vertical section only like a shallow plate, it will appear four times as shallow. So much for the *increased* horrors of the chasm of Loch Fyne when emptied. No doubt many a smiling valley with its stretching corn-fields occupies exactly such a "horrid chasm," from which the waters have receded, though it requires the insight and the far sight of the geologist to convince the unsuspecting inhabitants of this fact. Often an inquisitive eye may detect the shores of a primitive lake in the low horizon hills, and

Gilpin (1724–1804). Author of a series of works on the scenery of Britain, illustrated by aquatint engravings executed by himself.

So high as heaved, etc. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. VII. lines 288–290.

no subsequent elevations of the plain have been necessary to conceal their history. But it is easiest, as they who work on the highways know, to find the hollows by the puddles after a shower. The amount of it is, the imagination, give it the least license, dives deeper and soars higher than Nature goes. So, probably, the depth of the ocean will be found to be very inconsiderable compared with its breadth.

As I sounded through the ice I could determine the shape of the bottom with greater accuracy than is possible in surveying harbours which do not freeze over, and I was surprised at its general regularity. In the deepest part there are several acres more level than almost any field which is exposed to the sun, wind, and plough. In one instance, on a line arbitrarily chosen, the depth did not vary more than one foot in thirty rods; and generally, near the middle, I could calculate the variation of each one hundred feet in any direction beforehand within three or four inches. Some are accustomed to speak of deep and dangerous holes even in quiet sandy ponds like this, but the effect of water under these circumstances is to level all inequalities. The regularity of the bottom and its conformity to the shores and the range of the neighbouring hills were so perfect that a distant promontory betrayed itself in the soundings quite across the pond, and its direction could be determined by observing the opposite shore. Cape becomes bar, and plain shoal, and valley and gorge deep water and channel.

When I had mapped the pond by the scale of ten

rods to an inch, and put down the soundings, more than a hundred in all, I observed this remarkable coincidence. Having noticed that the number indicating the greatest depth was apparently in the centre of the map, I laid a rule on the map lengthwise, and then breadthwise, and found, to my surprise, that the line of greatest length intersected the line of greatest breadth *exactly* at the point of the greatest depth, notwithstanding that the middle is so nearly level, the outline of the pond far from regular, and the extreme length and breadth were got by measuring into the coves; and I said to myself, Who knows but this hint would conduct to the deepest part of the ocean as well as of a pond or puddle? Is not this the rule also for the height of mountains, regarded as the opposite of valleys? We know that a hill is not highest at its narrowest part.

Of five coves, three, or all which had been sounded, were observed to have a bar quite across their mouths and deeper water within, so that the bay tended to be an expansion of water within the land not only horizontally, but vertically, and to form a basin or independent pond, the direction of the two capes showing the course of the bar. Every harbour on the seacoast, also, has its bar at its entrance. In proportion as the mouth of the cove was wider compared with its length, the water over the bar was deeper compared with that in the basin. Given, then, the length and breadth of the cove, and the character of the surrounding shore, and you have almost elements enough to make out a formula for all cases.

In order to see how nearly I could guess, with this experience, at the deepest point in a pond, by observing the outlines of its surface and the character of its shores alone, I made a plan of White Pond, which contains about forty-one acres, and, like this, has no island in it, nor any visible inlet or outlet; and as the line of greatest breadth fell very near the line of least breadth, where two opposite capes approached each other and two opposite bays receded, I ventured to mark a point a short distance from the latter line, but still on the line of greatest length, as the deepest. The deepest part was found to be within one hundred feet of this, still farther in the direction to which I had inclined, and was only one foot deeper, namely, sixty feet. Of course a stream running through, or an island in the pond, would make the problem much more complicated.

If we knew all the laws of Nature, we should need only one fact, or the description of one actual phenomenon, to infer all the particular results at that point. Now we know only a few laws, and our result is vitiated, not, of course, by any confusion or irregularity in Nature, but by our ignorance of essential elements in the calculation. Our notions of law and harmony are commonly confined to those instances which we detect; but the harmony which results from a far greater number of seemingly conflicting, but really concurring, laws, which we have not detected, is still more wonderful. The particular laws are as our points of view, as, to the traveller, a mountain outline varies with every step, and it has an

infinite number of profiles, though absolutely but one form. Even when cleft or bored through it is not comprehended in its entireness.

What I have observed of the pond is no less true in ethics. It is the law of average. Such a rule of the two diameters not only guides us toward the sun in the system and the heart in man, but draw lines through the length and breadth of the aggregate of a man's particular daily behaviours and waves of life into his coves and inlets, and where they intersect will be the height or depth of his character. Perhaps we need only to know how his shores trend and his adjacent country or circumstances, to infer his depth and concealed bottom. If he is surrounded by mountainous circumstances, an Achillean shore, whose peaks overshadow and are reflected in his bosom, they suggest a corresponding depth in him. But a low and smooth shore proves him shallow on that side. In our bodies, a bold projecting brow falls off to and indicates a corresponding depth of thought. Also there is a bar across the entrance of our every cove, or particular inclination; each is our harbour for a season, in which we are detained and partially landlocked. These inclinations are not whimsical usually, but their form, size, and direction are determined by the promontories of the shore, the ancient axis of elevation. When this bar is gradually increased by storms, tides, or currents, or there is a subsidence of the waters, so that it reaches to the surface, that which was at first but an inclination in the shore in

Achillean. Like Achilles, stern, wrathful.

which a thought was harboured becomes an individual lake, cut off from the ocean, wherein the thought secures its own conditions, changes, perhaps, from salt to fresh, becomes a sweet sea, dead sea, or a marsh. At the advent of each individual into this life, may we not suppose that such a bar has risen to the surface somewhere? It is true, we are such poor navigators that our thoughts, for the most part, stand off and on upon a harbourless coast, are conversant only with the bights of the bays of poesy, or steer for the public ports of entry, and go into the dry docks of science, where they merely refit for this world, and no natural currents concur to individualise them.

As for the inlet or outlet of Walden, I have not discovered any but rain and snow and evaporation, though perhaps, with a thermometer and a line, such places may be found, for where water flows into the pond it will probably be coldest in summer and warmest in winter. When the icemen were at work here in '46-7, the cakes sent to the shore were one day rejected by those who were stacking them up there, not being thick enough to lie side by side with the rest; and the cutters thus discovered that the ice over a small space was two or three inches thinner than elsewhere, which made them think that there was an inlet there. They also showed me in another place what they thought was a "leach hole," through which the pond leaked out under a hill into a neigh-

Leach hole. To leach is to leak.

bouring meadow, pushing me out on a cake of ice to see it. It was a small cavity under ten feet of water; but I think that I can warrant the pond not to need soldering till they find a worse leak than that. One has suggested that if such a "leach hole" should be found, its connection with the meadow might be proved by conveying some coloured powder or sawdust to the mouth of the hole, and then putting a strainer over the spring in the meadow, which would catch some of the particles carried through by the current.

While I was surveying, the ice, which was sixteen inches thick, undulated under a slight wind like water. It is well known that a level cannot be used on ice. At one rod from the shore its greatest fluctuation, when observed by means of a level on land directed toward a graduated staff on the ice, was three quarters of an inch, though the ice appeared firmly attached to the shore. It was probably greater in the middle. Who knows but if our instruments were delicate enough we might detect an undulation in the crust of the earth? When two legs of my level were on the shore and the third on the ice, and the sights were directed over the latter, a rise or fall of the ice of an almost infinitesimal amount made a difference of several feet on a tree across the pond. When I began to cut holes for sounding, there were three or four inches of water on the ice under a deep snow which had sunk it thus far; but the water began immediately to run into these holes, and continued to run for two days in deep streams, which

wore away the ice on every side, and contributed essentially, if not mainly, to dry the surface of the pond; for, as the water ran in, it raised and floated the ice. This was somewhat like cutting a hole in the bottom of a ship to let the water out. When such holes freeze, and a rain succeeds, and finally a new freezing forms a fresh smooth ice over all, it is beautifully mottled internally by dark figures, shaped somewhat like a spider's web, what you may call ice rosettes, produced by the channels worn by the water flowing from all sides to a centre. Sometimes, also, when the ice was covered with shallow puddles, I saw a double shadow of myself, one standing on the head of the other—one on the ice, the other on the trees or hill-side.

While yet it is cold January, and snow and ice are thick and solid, the prudent landlord comes from the village to get ice to cool his summer drink; impressively, even pathetically wise, to foresee the heat and thirst of July now in January,—wearing a thick coat and mittens! when so many things are not provided for. It may be that he lays up no treasures in this world which will cool his summer drink in the next. He cuts and saws the solid pond, unroofs the house of fishes, and carts off their very element and air, held fast by chains and stakes like corded wood through the favouring winter air, to wintry cellars, to underlie the summer there. It looks like solidified azure, as, far off, it is drawn through the streets. These ice-cutters are a merry race, full of jest and

sport, and when I went among them they were wont to invite me to saw pit-fashion with them, I standing underneath.

In the winter of '46–7 there came a hundred men of Hyperborean extraction swoop down on to our pond one morning with many car-loads of ungainly-looking farming tools, sleds, ploughs, drill-barrows, turf-knives, spades, saws, rakes, and each man was armed with a double-pointed pike-staff, such as is not described in the "New-England Farmer" or the "Cultivator." I did not know whether they had come to sow a crop of winter rye, or some other kind of grain recently introduced from Iceland. As I saw no manure, I judged that they meant to skim the land, as I had done, thinking the soil was deep and had lain fallow long enough. They said that a gentleman farmer, who was behind the scenes, wanted to double his money, which, as I understood, amounted to half a million already; but in order to cover each one of his dollars with another, he took off the only coat, ay, the skin itself, of Walden Pond in the midst of a hard winter. They went to work at once, ploughing, harrowing, rolling, furrowing, in admirable order, as if they were bent on making this a model farm; but when I was looking sharp to see what kind of seed they dropped into the furrow, a gang of fellows by my side suddenly began to hook up the virgin

Hyperborean. Belonging to the north. A name applied to a race of people who are supposed to have lived in the extreme north.

New-England Farmer and *Cultivator.* Agricultural journals.

mould itself, with a peculiar jerk, clean down to the sand, or rather the water,—for it was a very springy soil,—indeed all the *terra firma* there was,—and haul it away on sleds, and then I guessed that they must be cutting peat in a bog. So they came and went every day, with a peculiar shriek from the locomotive, from and to some point of the polar regions, as it seemed to me, like a flock of arctic snow-birds. But sometimes Squaw Walden had her revenge, and a hired man, walking behind his team, slipped through a crack in the ground down toward Tartarus, and he who was so brave before suddenly became but the ninth part of a man, almost gave up his animal heat, and was glad to take refuge in my house, and acknowledge that there was some virtue in a stove; or sometimes the frozen soil took a piece of steel out of a ploughshare, or a plough got set in the furrow and had to be cut out.

To speak literally, a hundred Irishmen, with Yankee overseers, came from Cambridge every day to get out the ice. They divided it into cakes by methods too well known to require description, and these, being sledded to the shore, were rapidly hauled off on to an ice platform, and raised by grappling irons and block and tackle, worked by horses, on to a stack, as surely as so many barrels of flour, and there placed

Squaw. The North American Indian term for a wife. Here applied by Thoreau to the lake he loved.

Tartarus. An abyss under the earth where the Titans (giants) were chained after their fight against Uranus.

Cambridge. Town in Massachusetts, and seat of Harvard University.

evenly side by side, and row upon row, as if they formed the solid base of an obelisk designed to pierce the clouds. They told me that in a good day they could get out a thousand tons, which was the yield of about one acre. Deep ruts and "cradle holes" were worn in the ice, as on *terra firma*, by the passage of the sleds over the same track, and the horses invariably ate their oats out of cakes of ice hollowed out like buckets.

They stacked up the cakes thus in the open air in a pile thirty-five feet high on one side and six or seven rods square, putting hay between the outside layers to exclude the air; for when the wind, though never so cold, finds a passage through, it will wear large cavities, leaving slight supports or studs only here and there, and finally topple it down. At first it looked like a vast blue fort or Valhalla; but when they began to tuck the coarse meadow hay into the crevices, and this became covered with rime and icicles, it looked like a venerable moss-grown and hoary ruin, built of azure-tinted marble, the abode of Winter, that old man we see in the almanac—his shanty, as if he had a design to estivate with us. They calculated that not twenty-five per cent. of this would reach its destination, and that two or three per cent. would be wasted in the cars. However, a still

Cradle holes. Sunken places in a roadway caused by thawing or by the wearing away of a soft spot.

Valhalla. In the Norse mythology Valhalla is the palace of the immortals, inhabited by the souls of heroes slain in battle.

Estivate. Pass the summer.

greater part of this heap had a different destiny from what was intended; for, either because the ice was found not to keep so well as was expected, containing more air than usual, or for some other reason, it never got to market. This heap, made in the winter of '46-7 and estimated to contain ten thousand tons, was finally covered with hay and boards; and though it was unroofed the following July, and a part of it carried off, the rest remaining exposed to the sun, it stood over that summer and the next winter, and was not quite melted till September 1848. Thus the pond recovered the greater part.

Like the water, the Walden ice, seen near at hand, has a green tint, but at a distance is beautifully blue, and you can easily tell it from the white ice of the river or the merely greenish ice of some ponds, a quarter of a mile off. Sometimes one of those great cakes slips from the ice-man's sled into the village street, and lies there for a week like a great emerald, an object of interest to all passers. I have noticed that a portion of Walden which in the state of water was green, will often, when frozen, appear from the same point of view blue. So the hollows about this pond will, sometimes, in the winter, be filled with a greenish water somewhat like its own, but the next day will have frozen blue. Perhaps the blue colour of water and ice is due to the light and air they contain, and the most transparent is the bluest. Ice is an interesting subject for contemplation. They told me that they had some in the ice-houses at Fresh

Pond five years old which was as good as ever. Why is it that a bucket of water soon becomes putrid, but frozen remains sweet for ever? It is commonly said that this is the difference between the affections and the intellect.

Thus for sixteen days I saw from my window a hundred men at work like busy husbandmen, with teams and horses and apparently all the implements of farming, such a picture as we see on the first page of the almanac; and as often as I looked out I was reminded of the fable of the lark and the reapers, or the parable of the sower, and the like; and now they are all gone; and in thirty days more, probably, I shall look from the same window on the pure sea-green Walden water there, reflecting the clouds and the trees, and sending up its evaporations in solitude, and no traces will appear that a man has ever stood there. Perhaps I shall hear a solitary loon laugh as he dives and plumes himself, or shall see a lonely fisher in his boat, like a floating leaf, beholding his form reflected in the waves, where lately a hundred men securely laboured.

Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning

Lark and the reapers. The fable which tells us how the lark and her young only left the wheatfield when the farmer decided that he and his sons would cut the wheat themselves. As long as he talked of getting help from his friends the mother lark felt that she could safely remain. For *parable of sower* see Mark, ch. iv.

Loon. A seabird of the class of the Divers.

I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagvat Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions.

I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water-jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets, as it were, grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. With favouring winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the periplus of

Cosmogonal. Relating to the creation of the world.

Bhagvat Geeta. A religious poem incorporated in the Indian epic poem, the *Mahabharata.*

Brahmins. The highest and priestly caste in the religious system of Hinduism, in which *Brahma* is the universal Spirit and cause of all existence; *Vishnu* the spirit that pervades the universe and the preserver of all things; *Indra* the ruler of the firmament and the lord of the virtuous. The *Vedas* are the sacred books of Hinduism.

Atlantis. A mythical island, supposed by the Greeks to be located somewhere in the Atlantic.

Hesperides. The name of the sisters who guarded the golden apples of Hera, with the help of a dragon, in the gardens of the Hesperides. These gardens were placed in the west on the verge of the Atlantic not far from Mt. Atlas.

Hanno, and, floating by Ternate and Tidore, and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names.

Hanno. A Carthaginian who made a voyage of discovery along the west coast of Africa. An account of this voyage remains in a Greek version known as *The Periplus of Hanno* (*periplus* = voyage).

Ternate and Tidore. Islands in the Moluccas.

Alexander. The great world conqueror and King of Macedon (356–323 B.C.).

Compare Gilbert White's simple treatment of winter frosts in his *Natural History of Selborne*, Letters to Barrington, lxi., lxii., lxiii. See also Lowell's *A Good Word for Winter*.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

I

Tell me, thou Star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
  Will thy pinions close now?

II

Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
  Seekest thou repose now?

III

Weary Wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
  On the tree or billow?

SHELLEY.

ALAN SULLIVAN

THE timber fails just beyond the 59th parallel. First the delicate white birch dwindles, then the smooth bark poplar before his rougher brother, then the spruce vanishes, till, beside the river beds that tempestuous waters have cut deep below the plains, there is only a fringe of tamarack and willow and dwarf pine.

Spring moves at first gently across these solitudes. There is a strange period in April, when the stark rigour of winter is alleviated by soft hollows in the north winds. There are pauses and cessations, intermittent and slowly more constant, and then the winds swing suddenly from east and south. Instantly there is a divine change. On sunward slopes the snow is sucked up into these gentle airs, and May floats up from warmer latitudes across leagues of wild heather and caribou moss.

The Cycle of the North. For this essay see the author's *Passing of Oul-i-but and Other Tales*, 1913.

Spruce. One of the fir trees.

Tamarack. The Canadian Indian name for the American or black larch, a particularly graceful tree with deep green foliage.

Caribou moss. So called because eaten by the *caribou*, the American reindeer.

Then the sturdy growths spring into life. The anemone spreads in great stunted patches of lilac bloom. The snow forget-me-not thrusts through the shreds of winter's disappearing blanket, white as that winter itself, and wild croci flaunt yellow blossoms streaked with fiery red. On low land the tulip is star scattered in deep moss, red also like fire, and the dwarf saskatoons prepare for their profusion of hardy pears.

But ere the blossoms come the population of the barren lands grows with the lengthening days. First the eagles in royal austerity, beating north to breed on the islands of the Arctic. Then dancing clouds of grey-white snow-birds, vociferous rooks and swift wedges of great Canada geese, flanked with drifting flocks of ducks. All these are hardy birds, equipped for the broken weather that yet must come. In the weeks that follow there is a quick procession, a general immigration of smaller geese and ducks, of cranes, woodpeckers and plover, and last of all the swans, incredibly high and marvellously swift, whipping the air with huge wings, whose tip feathers are worn and broken in the long passage from Florida and the Caribbean, and the remoteness of South America.

On land there is movement and life. Vast herds of caribou does ripple steadily north to bear their young, secure because nature has robbed their hooves of scent, and the grey wolves, the enemies of their race, cannot thereby track them. Along the steep shores of Hudson's Bay, the she-bear issues lean and

Saskatoons. Canadian shrubs which bear a luscious fruit.

ravenous, with the young she has borne and nourished behind a snow bank, while she fasted the winter long. The salt shores are fringed with her hungry sisters, with tall coast wolves, and white and red foxes, all seeking the dead things from the sea. Musk oxen leave the fringe of timber and graze suspiciously, snuffing flies and mosquitoes and wasps into their red throats, of which many shall sicken and die.

Now comes July and August when the earth is bright with roses and fruit. The yellow moonberry swells from the centre of its four-leaved white flower. The eyeberry runs riot. Crowberries shine like black pearls amid their star-shaped foliage. The blueberry is everywhere, with low, flat bushes and clusters of oval sweetness. The cranberry climbs on the rocks and sands. The snakeberry nods in single perfection, poisonous on its slender stem, and kinikinic, the weedberry, waits till some wandering redman shall pluck and dry it for the redman's tobacco.

The plains are carpeted with the profuse blossom of the wild tea, whose velvety-pointed leaf brings comfort by many a camp fire. Next the soil, the coarse, green moss thrusts out its plum-coloured bloom or spreads viewless beneath grey tufts that live upon its surface. On the rocks, splintered by the ice, black lichens stick, thick and cuplike, ere they whiten and die.

Kini-kinic or weedberry. One of the plants whose leaves and bark are smoked by the North American Indians.

And all this time the days are getting longer and the air milder, and the stiff earth turns to slacken her rigid joints and yield the wonderful life that lives but for weeks. Now, too, may be seen the operations of those vital laws and customs that rule the wild. The bulls of the musk oxen patrol their herds in a shaggy and truculent circle, outside of which their outlaws, outlaws by age or ill temper, are pulled down by their ancient enemies. Across the flat country a swan's nest marks bay and point. Here the mother bird hatches her young, while the husband hies to the congregation of males, meeting daily where the food is good. The conclave is that of a club, severely masculine, and the lords of many nests commune noisily together. To the club also, may come the mother, should her mate be killed, to choose another spouse; but only for this intimate and selective purpose is her approach permitted. Coastwise, range packs of white foxes, defenceless singly, but invincible together, and the grey wolves hunt the polar bear, surrounding him with a ring of snapping jaws, when the salt mud sinks under his feet at low tide.

Then as the year fattens, comes the physical change, and fur and feather, worn, matted and broken, are put away for the new covering that grows before the autumn closes. The swans cluster in solitary places to moult, places where there are periwinkles and clams and crabs and berries for the taking. The caribou move slowly with patches of new hair spreading on their multi-coloured flanks. Everywhere there is an

Clam. One of the edible shellfish.

easing and slackening of the eternal war. Carcajou, the wolverine, is too lazy to steal, and eats dead fish, and the white bears drowse in the languid heat.

In September there is a quickening of wild blood. From lonely places the fat moulting birds begin to waddle toward the coast. There is a touch of frost at night, and all plants and fruits fling themselves out with ultimate and prodigal profusion. In the north the caribou does turn with their young and begin to trot south with the sound of a multitude of clicking hoofs and horns, for they do not shed their antlers like the bucks. Then also small tribes that neither hibernate nor eat moss, the rats and beaver and squirrels, replenish their stores.

Gradually the salt water edges become peopled with travellers preparing for that most wonderful journey in the world. Mallard, widgeon, teal, plover, geese, swans, all the broad and narrow billed brotherhood assembles. Night and day the tumult of them ascends. There is eating of sand for digestion, and digging of shellfish to harden muscles softened by the sweet things of the plains; for it is common knowledge that there will be no more sea food till they sight the swamps of the Gulf of Mexico. The air is black with trial flights of young birds trying the strength of young pinions, coming back to earth with calls and whistles and quacking and trumpeting. Old birds, strong of wing and weatherwise, mount to invisible spaces looking for that whisper of the north

Carcajou. American Indian name of the wolverine or glutton.

they all await, till as the autumn days of Indian summer pass, the colonies grow strong and clean and confident.

And then, of a sudden, there is stillness in the air and a grey sky, and with a few white flakes the word of the mysterious north has come. A crisping of the shallow pools and the ducks climb circling into a slender wedge, with the wisest and strongest at the point of it. In two hours the shores are desolate of ducks, for they have far to travel and must start betimes. And so the marvellous procession marshals its appointed order with the wisdom that lies behind the flat skulls and beady eyes of winged things. As they come they go. The weaker ones first who must stay and rest often by the way and brave innumerable dangers in their short journeys, till only are left the swans, whose single flight can be a thousand miles, who seek the high altitudes where the air is thin. Then, when the swans have gone, the royal eagles throb down from the Arctic in lonely passage along deserted leagues, and when the eagles have sped there is silence on the coasts.

Little by little the ice forms. Lakes narrow. Headland joins to headland. The male white bears follow out, fishing for seals and walrus. Wood buffalo and musk oxen seek shelter in the land of little sticks, and only the coast caribou and bigger wolves brave the open. The barren ground bear hides himself in warmth and sleep, and carcajou finds a deserted foxhole.

Indian summer. The name given in North America to a period of summer-like weather occurring in the autumn.

Then comes the snow, light, impalpable and fine like star dust, and behind it the first breathing of that north wind that searches the plain for months. The land tightens, shrinks and hardens. Its rugged ridges are smoothed out in soft curves that swim into each other. Day is obliterated in the half light of a sun that seems a stranger in these regions of death, till with relentless force and swiftness rises the steady drone of the wind. Winter has come to the barren lands.

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

NATURE WRITING IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

THIS *Anthology of the Open-Air* is a witness to that love of the country-side which is so well-marked a feature of our modern life. Never before in the history of the nation has there been so intelligent a love of nature as there is at present; at no time previously have the pleasures of the out-door life been so fully appreciated. Most people nowadays are interested in the scenery and varied natural life of the English country-side; many persons travel abroad to see the sights which other lands afford; all alike find pleasure in the beauties of the landscape, or in the varied manifestations of natural life; while there are many, too, who find pleasure in reading of these things.

Yet this love of Nature is of modern growth. Most of our early English forefathers, busily engaged from morning till night in tilling the soil, had little opportunity of consulting her infinite book of secrecy and saw little matter of enjoyment in natural scenery; though they, too, loved the freedom of the open-air with its opportunities of hunting and sport, and preferred their country manor houses and homesteads to the castles they occupied when necessity arose. Not that they were insensible to Nature's appeal to them, but that other matters of more immediate necessity, other calls of soul and body, left them with

but scanty leisure for studying and loving her. We have only to turn to such lyrics as the well-known *Alysoun*, or the charming *Lenten ys come with love to toune*, or the oft-quoted *Sumer is icumen in*, to realise that the poet, then as always, responded to the call of the spring. Chaucer, indeed, confesses that, in spite of his great love of reading, the days of spring always drove him out of doors:

> And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
> On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
> And to hem give I feyth and ful credence,
> And in myn herte have hem in reverence
> So hertely, that ther is game noon
> That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
> But it be seldom on the holy day,
> Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May
> Is comen, and that I here the foules synge,
> And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,—
> Farewel my boke, and my devocion.

But so far as the English people generally were concerned, it was not until the Renaissance had brought with it a sense of joy in life and in beauty, that any considerable interest in natural scenery was manifested. The change in outlook which then took place turned man's attention from thoughts of himself to an examination of his surroundings, and a love of nature was born in him. Yet, even so, when travel had become so necessary a part of every gentleman's career that no one's education was considered complete until he had made the *Grand Tour* of the Continent, it was the town and town life that attracted the attention of the traveller. Hence in Bacon's well-known essay *Of Travel*, which gives us in short compass full direc-

tions for making the most of the tour abroad, we find the tourist's attention directed to courts of princes and courts of justice, to havens and harbours, antiquities and ruins, armouries and arsenals, and even to weddings, funerals and executions, but never to natural scenery. It is only in exceptional circumstances that a recognition of the beauties of nature is found. Some of the poets, like country-bred Shakespeare, who remained always in touch with his delightful Forest of Arden, can write lovingly of birds and flowers, of daisies pied and violets blue, of the primroses that come before the swallow dares and take the winds of March with beauty, and of the azur'd harebell and the eglantine, and can find sermons in stones and books in the running brooks. These are the exceptions. For the average man there is more pleasure to be found in the towered cities and the busy hum of men. True, there were famous travellers in those days who wandered by land and sea, and wrote of what they had seen; but even these find little pleasure in the natural landscape, and prefer to dwell rather on the marvels they have seen or rather heard of, and so to write

> Of antres vast and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills, whose heads touch heaven;
> And of the Cannibals, that each other eat,
> The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders.

Otherwise the love of nature which is now beginning to penetrate the minds of men is visible only in a formal, orderly, symmetrical and artificial arrangement

of gardens. The English still love to be out of doors, and so they plan gardens of intricate type in which they can wander, and in the preparation of which they can take delight. Hence it is fitting that the essay of earliest date in this anthology deals with the making of an Elizabethan garden. This love of gardens continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nature unadorned had but few admirers, and the sterner beauties of mountain scenery were still hidden even from them. Not until we come to the poet Gray (1716–1771) do we find any catholic appreciation of natural scenery. The mountains and lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland, the farm-houses dotted among the trees, the cattle feeding along the lake sides, appeal strongly to him. When he crosses the Alps for the first time he writes home to a friend, that "not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry"; and he speaks of the Scottish Highlands as ecstatic, and thinks they ought to be visited in pilgrimage once a year.

Yet this love of natural scenery is not the chief characteristic of Gray's verse, but is to be found in his letters and journals. An earlier poet of the century, however, James Thomson, had already begun to give word-pictures of natural scenery in his poetry. Thomson was born and bred in the Lowlands of Scotland, and in his poems he describes the sights and sounds of his native country-side, and the changing aspects of the unfolding seasons of the year. His contemporaries, however, still followed in the main the traditions of Dryden and Pope, and it was not until the second half

of the century that nature once again found a prominent place in English verse. Cowper then gave realistic pictures of his secluded life in the little country town of Olney; Crabbe described the scenery and life of his native Suffolk; Burns dealt with the everyday life of cottar and ploughman in the Scottish Lowlands; Wordsworth and Coleridge ushered in the Romantic Revival; and from that day to this, nature, animate and inanimate, has had a prominent place in English poetry.

But it was not in poetry alone that this love of nature was to find expression. The eighteenth century saw the remarkable development of the essay as a literary vehicle for the expression of thoughts and opinions of the most varied kind; and the essay was quickly seized upon as a valuable instrument for recording personal observations of men and things in town and country alike. In the hands of the first great essayists attention was mainly devoted to the town, as is natural in the eighteenth century, though Defoe's description of his *Travels in Britain* is still unsurpassed in its kind, and Addison visited the country with his friend Sir Roger de Coverley. But Addison, Steele, and Johnson used the essay mainly for descriptions of town life, they belonged to the age in which it was considered that the proper study of mankind was man, and this delight in the animated life of the town has never been lost by the English people; there are many to-day to whom the town makes a greater appeal than the country does, though this aspect has been somewhat neglected of late by

our essayists and remains to be restored, as it certainly will. But almost from the beginning it has found a place in the work of the novelist, and at the present time the outward appearance and the varied life of London, Manchester, the Five Towns and other large centres of population are being faithfully presented to us by one set of novelists, just as the natural scenery of Wessex, Devon and Cornwall, the Pennines, and the Lowlands of Scotland are being used as backgrounds by another company.

In the main, however, the appeal of the nineteenth century has been to the country rather than the town; and it has come to its votaries in widely different forms. Sometimes it comes as a desire to wander, a love of walking and a delight in a pleasant vagabondage, and we get essays such as those of Stevenson, Hazlitt, and Edward Thomas. Sometimes the journey along the country-side is made with a preconceived object in view, political or otherwise, and all the observations are tinged with the prepossessions of the observer; sometimes it is patient and loving observation of the birds and flowers and natural phenomena of the country-side, as is the case with Jefferies. At times, too, there is the desire to live the life of the recluse so as to enter more deeply into communion with nature, as with Thoreau; or it may be that the writer is content to give us a vivid pen picture of the scene, as with Miss Mitford and Walter Raymond; while in this collection there is added a touch of Greater Britain by Alan Sullivan's delightful description of the changes in the northern Canadian year.

ABILITY to write an essay is so important a part of the work of the student of English literature, that readers of this book will doubtless desire to use these essays, not only for their contents, but also in order to obtain from them some help in the preparation of their own compositions. For one good way of improving one's efforts in this direction is careful analysis of the work of the masters of the art, and copious practice in following their example. This, at any rate, is the considered opinion of so great an essayist as Robert Louis Stevenson. "All through my boyhood and youth," he tells us in *Memories and Portraits*, "I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler, and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. . . . Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the co-ordination of parts." It does, not, of course, follow that when we have carefully followed Stevenson's advice, and have

done our best to imitate what is best in these writings, we too shall be numbered among the masters of the art of essay writing; but careful attention to their excellencies and our own defects will do much to improve what we can do, while such a treatment is also well worth attempting for its own sake, for it will add greatly to our enjoyment of these and other essays.

The essay itself is one of the most interesting and attractive forms of English prose writing, and its use is correspondingly widespread. Since this form was popularised by Montaigne a little over three centuries ago, it has been used at different times for almost all kinds of subjects, literary, philosophical, historical, critical, polemical, descriptive, and personal; indeed, it is not easy to mention any class of subject which may not be brought within its scope. Moreover the treatment of this subject matter may be as varied as the matter itself is; in this book, for example, all the essays deal with the out-door life, so that there is in them a unity of subject matter, but the treatment of this subject matter is as varied as the number of authors the book contains.

Since this is so, it follows that the treatment of the subject matter by any one person is not intended to be exhaustive. According to the derivation of the word an essay is an attempt, and not a consummation. It is rather an adventure upon a more or less uncharted sea, and should be treated accordingly. And, even where the subject has already been treated almost to the point of exhaustion, there may still be place

for the new essayist. For it is essential that the essay should convey to the reader something of the personality of the writer, and of his mood at the time of writing. It is this presence of the writer in the essay, animating it and giving it its definite tone, that is the especial charm of our greatest essayists. Some of the greatest of English essays are also the most egotistical; none are more charming than those which place us upon a footing of intimacy with the writer himself. We must feel Jefferies' loving communion with nature, Stevenson's exhilaration as he lives in the open air, Hazlitt's love of reading, and so on; and if we are to enjoy their writings, we must be in sympathy with them as we feel. Hence, when we attempt an essay ourselves, we also must try, as they do, to express our own point of view on the subject of which we are writing, and let our own personality and our mood find expression in it; and if we do this it is obvious that we shall not expect to find a series of essays on any particular subject alike in matter and arrangement, but that we shall hope rather for a great diversity of treatment.

But besides these more elusive points, there are also a number of more technical matters whose observance is distinctly helpful to the beginner. Thus we may learn much from a consideration of the structure of some of these essays. Notice how carefully our authors commence their essays. Here, at any rate, the proverb holds good which tells us that well begun is half done. At the beginning the essayist may arrest our attention by some striking

thought, or he may suggest the subject matter of his essay, or he may even tell us the method of treatment he proposes to adopt. Go through the essays in this collection, and consider carefully how each writer has introduced his subject. Bacon, for example, strikes the key-note of his essay at once with an arresting thought: "God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures"; Hazlitt gives both the subject of his essay, "One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey," and also his mode of treatment, "but I like to go by myself," in the very first sentence.

More important still is the essay's conclusion; and it is here especially that so many beginners fail. It is not sufficient for the writer to leave off when he is tired, or feels that he has written enough. It is very important that the essay should be rounded off with a fitting conclusion, and this should complete the thought and leave a sense of finality and finish in the mind of the reader. There are good examples of this in this collection of essays. Read over Stevenson's *Walking Tours* and his *Night among the Pines* to see how he finishes them, and then consider the other essays from the same point of view, and you will realise how carefully each essay has been brought to its conclusion.

But even when we have perfected our commencement and conclusion the main portion of the essay remains to be dealt with. Here the arrangement of the subject matter is of very great importance. Our aim must be to present the material clearly and

distinctly, and in order to do this, we must make sure that we are presenting it in logical sequence, in a series of paragraphs which follow in orderly fashion the progress of our thoughts upon the subject under consideration. The formation of paragraphs is not easy; no merely mechanical chopping up of the subject matter into more or less equal portions will suffice. Each paragraph is, as it were, an essay within the essay; it deals with a definite unitary portion of the subject matter, as the essay deals with the subject matter as a whole, and the commencement and conclusion of each paragraph require the most careful consideration. Help in this matter may be obtained by taking one of the essays and writing down a title or side-heading for each paragraph of it. The student will then have before him an analysis of the essay, which will show him how the essay has been planned and developed, and assist him in planning future essays for himself.

By this time the beginner will have realised how necessary it is that he shall think out clearly the method he intends to adopt in his essay before he commences to write it. No essay can hope to succeed which does not follow a well-thought-out plan.

And even when the whole has been planned much remains to be done in the actual writing, if the essay is to prove a success. Good expression may be greatly assisted by the right choice of words, and by the fitting use of figurative language, such as personification, metaphor, and simile. We must not be contented with the first word that comes to mind, but

must seek for that word which will express with the greatest precision the thought we wish to utter. Stevenson somewhere emphasises the importance of an "apt choice and contrast of the words employed," and there are plenty of examples of this in these essays. Consider, for example, the following from the first twenty pages: canting dilettanti (page 9), trot and mince (11), inauspicious (13), epicure (14), mitigated (17), amorous precision (17), audacious word (18), derisive silence of eternity (19), Philistines perspiring after wealth (20), and then take other examples of your own choosing. You may then deal in similar fashion with the use of figures of speech, as in Thomas's *Clouds over the Sea*, or Jefferies' *Pageant of Summer*.

Closely allied to this is the employment of quotations and allusions. Some writers are able to add greatly to the charm of their efforts by a happy use of these. But a happy use involves their being apposite and pointed and following naturally the course of the thought; they must never be added for ostentation and vainglory, from a desire to show how learned or widely read the writer is. It is easily possible to abuse this practice; and to allow the essay to degenerate into a string of quotations, or to overload it with unfitting allusions is much to be avoided. Hazlitt is one of the masters of the art of happy quotation, as a reference to his essay *On going a Journey* will show; but even so, De Quincey, one of the greatest of English essayists, is of opinion that he used them to excess. All our authors make successful use of allusions, as a reference to the annotations will show;

a good instance of their use is to be found in the closing paragraphs of Thoreau's essay on *The Pond in Winter*.

There is also the question of rhythm in our prose. The phrases and sentences must unfold themselves in a manner that is pleasing to the ear. They must not overstep the bounds of prose and become regularly metrical, that would be bad; but they must contain a rhythm and accentuation of their own, for this adds a charm to their reading. Perhaps the best thing that the beginner can do will be to read his work aloud and judge of its effect upon his own ear, eliminating what seems harsh and unpleasing, and improving those portions which seem to give a rhythmical effect. Take as examples of what is wanted the last two paragraphs of Stevenson's *Walking Tours*, and when you have thoroughly mastered their contents, read them aloud and listen to the rhythm of their prose.

It is only by carefully attending to points such as have been suggested that we can hope to improve our own compositions, and finally arrive at that elusive something which the critics speak of as an author's style, the something which is peculiar to his writing, the something which enables us at once to recognise his work and marks it off as essentially his and no one's else. Many definitions of style have been attempted; a French writer of the seventeenth century says: "To say what one wishes to say, and to say it as we wish to say it, and finally to produce by our written word exactly the effect we wish; these are the steps;

those who mount them (and they are few) have acquired a style." This style is the goal which we must strive to reach, a goal in truth not easily attained, but in our efforts to reach it we shall probably find that our greatest aids will be the cultivation of naturalness and simplicity.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Seal to Queen Elizabeth, and Anne Cooke, one of three sisters of high intellectual attainments, another of whom became the wife of the great Lord Burghley. From early youth Bacon showed that he possessed more than ordinary intellectual ability, and, after leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, he became a student of the law with a view to a career in the public service. Here, however, his promotion was checked for a time by the opposition of his uncle, Lord Burghley. Under James I., however, his talents were recognised, and he became in 1618 Lord High Chancellor, Baron Verulam, and finally Viscount St. Albans. In 1621 he was convicted by Parliament of receiving bribes, and was dismissed from office. The rest of his days were spent in retirement.

All through his life he was a zealous student of many subjects, having, as he himself expressed it, "taken all knowledge to be his province." One of his chief titles to fame is that he helped to bring about a change in the methods of scientific study, and so aided in the overthrow of the old Scholastic philosophy. He wrote many works on this and other subjects, but the work of which he himself thought least, his *Essays*,

is now by far the most widely read of all his books. In his case an essay is literally an attempt, a collection of brief pithy utterances upon the subject proposed, full of suggestiveness and capable of much elaboration, but remarkable for its clearness and conciseness of utterance at a time when these characteristics were by no means common to English prose.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830) was the son of a prominent Unitarian minister, and was himself educated for the ministry, though he never became a preacher. His boyhood was in some respects a very fortunate one, for his father's position as a dissenting minister brought the boy into contact with many persons of good education and high intellectual capacity; his boyhood also included a four years' sojourn in the United States. He was fortunate, too, in that he was not compelled to start on any profession until he had found the work for which he was suited. One of the important formative influences in his life was a visit which Coleridge paid to the Hazlitts, who were then living in Shropshire, and the young Hazlitt's return visit to Nether Stowey, where he spent a short holiday with Coleridge and Wordsworth.

After giving up the idea of becoming a minister, he studied painting for a time, and also lectured on philosophy. Finally he took up journalism as his profession, wrote reports of parliamentary proceedings, and did much good work as a dramatic critic. In carrying out this work, he was associated with the group of Liberal essayists who worked with Leigh Hunt, and became himself an important and volu-

minous essayist. His works show his wide reading, his originality of thought, and his real gift of criticism; while his clear, brilliant, and incisive style will always ensure for his best work a considerable body of readers.

Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855) was the only child of a father of careless and extravagant habits, "a good-looking and profligate spendthrift," who was continually running into debt, and troubling his household in consequence. As a child she was taken by her father to a public lottery, and a ticket he bought in her name won for her a prize of £10,000. While this money lasted she was able to obtain a good education, but thanks to her father the whole fortune ultimately disappeared, and the family was forced to retire to a cottage in the hamlet of Three Mile Cross on the high road between Reading and Basingstoke. Here she had to provide the means of support for her father and herself, and so she became a contributor of poems and prose articles to the magazines, as well as a fairly successful dramatist. Her work brought her into contact with many important persons, who thought highly of her powers as a letter-writer and conversationalist, and were proud of her friendship. They were particularly interested in a series of sketches of country life as she saw it in and around Three Mile Cross, and this series—reprinted as *Our Village*—is her chief title to literary fame. Her descriptions of the everyday events of the remote and homely country-side are pictures which always give pleasure to the reader because of their kindliness and unfailing

good-humour, as well as because of their charming simplicity.

Henry David Thoreau was born in 1817 at Concord, Mass., then a New England country village of about 2,000 inhabitants. His mother was a woman of marked individuality of character, and from an early date Thoreau showed that he too was a person of marked peculiarities, being very reserved, fond of solitary walks and camping out, and much given to self-communings and self-examination; while he never seems to have placed a very high value upon the various forms of social intercourse and those so-called necessities of everyday life, which habit has made almost indispensable to us. Hence in 1845 we find him cutting himself off from society to live the life of a recluse in close communion with nature. The possessor of less than five pounds in money, he borrowed an axe and settled down in the woods by Walden Pond, where he built a cabin, and cultivated a patch of land for food for himself. For a few weeks in each summer he worked for hire, and the money he obtained sufficed to provide those necessities of civilisation which he could not manage without. The rest of the year was spent in contact with Nature, whom he watched with the loving interest of a poet. The results of his observations are to be found in his books. "His better style as a writer is in keeping with the simplicity and purity of his life," and it owes very much to an extensive and intimate acquaintance with the greatest masters of English prose and poetry.

John Ruskin (1819–1900) was the only son of wealthy parents, who lived, during the greater part of his boyhood, in the south of London. His early education was, for the most part, private, but he completed it at Oxford University. He owed a great deal, during these early years, to the watchful care of his mother, and through her, he devoted much time to reading the Bible, a book which influenced considerably his work as a writer. He was deeply interested in art and studied painting, and soon became a critic of existing methods of English art, and a zealous defender of Turner. His efforts in this direction led to the publication of his *Modern Painters*, a work which exercised a great influence on the subsequent development of art in England, and at the same time showed that a new master of English prose had been born. Ruskin next studied architecture, and soon his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and his *Stones of Venice* appeared; they were followed by other works on these and kindred subjects.

He also turned his attention to Political Economy and attacked many of the received doctrines of that "dismal science"; at the same time formulating a system of his own, in which he sought to raise the aims of the science above the pursuit of material wealth only, to that of the well-being of all concerned. He was also deeply interested in the dangers associated with the industrial developments of his time.

Always a sturdy fighter for truth and righteousness, as he saw them, he became to many a prophet, creating a new interest in the beauties of nature, art, and

literature, and pointing the way to higher ideals of thought and conduct; and his noble appeals gained very much by his wonderful gift of word-painting and the magic of his glorious prose.

John Richard Jefferies was born in 1848 of west-country yeoman stock, in a Wiltshire hamlet near Swindon. His youth was spent among the open expanses and the thickets and copses of the Marlborough Downs; his home was an old thatched farmhouse with a large orchard and garden, which had been a family possession for several generations; his friends and associates included the gamekeepers and farmers of the country-side. His school education was somewhat irregular and broken by ill-health; and the real education of this somewhat dreamy boy was the loving interest he took in the varied animal and vegetable life of field and pond and hedgerow.

Journalism became his profession, and an eager desire to write led to the production of some not very successful novels, and some nature essays for the magazines in which he showed a remarkable capacity for the observation and record of natural phenomena. Unfortunately ill-health dogged him through life, and after some years in London and its neighbourhood he sought health in the south-east of England and especially in Sussex, writing and dictating essays all the time. He never found money very plentiful, for his circle of admirers and readers was never a very large one, and some years of toil and pain were only ended in 1887 by his death.

He was a close and observant lover of nature, and we may well stand amazed at the wonderful detail of his observations. Nothing seems to escape his attention, and at his best he gives his observations back to us in a splendidly simple but poetic prose, while his record is not merely one of objective observation, for he brings his personality to bear on all he writes, and clothes his work with his own carefully thought-out philosophy of nature.

John Addington Symonds (1840–93) had a distinguished career at Balliol College, Oxford; but was soon obliged to reside abroad on account of failing health. He spent much of his time in Switzerland and Italy, and obtained an intimate acquaintance with Italian life and with the works of Italian writers. Both of these, therefore, figure largely in the books and articles he wrote. His most important work is his *History of the Italian Renaissance*, but he excelled also as a translator of Italian poets and writers, and as a critic of their works. Besides this, he produced studies of the Greek poets, and of the predecessors and contemporaries of Shakespeare in English drama. He is a stylist with a highly polished style, and his work is always marked by careful and thoughtful study and judgment.

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh of Scottish parents in 1850. During childhood he suffered from ill-health and in consequence of this his education was somewhat irregular. From his boyhood onward he was eager to become an author, and struggled hard in this direction. Unfortunately he had also to struggle

against illness, and this struggle involved his moving from place to place in search of a climate which would not tax his lungs too severely. But he was a born wanderer and enjoyed his journeys, and also wrote some charming descriptions of them. His pursuit of health finally brought him to the South Seas, and to Upolu, one of the islands of the Samoa group, on which he spent the last three years of his life in better health than he had known for some time. He died there suddenly in 1896 and was buried on the top of a mountain peak near his home on the island. He left behind him a collection of poetry, novels and essays, which show him to be one of the great stylists of the nineteenth century.

Edward Thomas (1878–1917) was one of the best known of our modern lovers of the English country-side. He was educated at St. Paul's School and Lincoln College, Oxford; and became a wanderer over the highways and byways of southern England. He knew the country-side by heart, and could write of it in a simple and direct language which brought him a wide circle of admirers. He was a careful student of English literature and a cultured and scholarly critic of the works of several English authors. In the closing year of his life he also appeared as a poet, under the pseudonym of Edward Eastaway. Soon after war broke out he joined the Artists' Rifles, and ultimately went to France as a lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery. Two years later, in the spring of 1917, he was killed in action at the front, and was buried in France, away from the English

country-side he had known so intimately and had loved so well.

Of the remaining contributors to this collection, nothing need here be said, for they are happily still to be counted among living authors.

SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS

1. State which essay you like best in this anthology, and give reasons for your choice.

2. Point out any excellences of thought or construction which you have observed in (*a*) *A Night among the Pines*, or (*b*) *The Mountain Glory*.

3. Make an analysis of Bacon's Essay *Of Gardens*.

4. What evidences are there in the essays of (*a*) Stevenson, (*b*) Ruskin, (*c*) Edward Thomas, (*d*) Miss Mitford, of the things each individually liked or disliked?

5. Show from Hazlitt's *On Going a Journey* some of the works he preferred as a reader.

6. Name three paragraphs in these essays which seem to you of special merit. Give a title to each of these paragraphs, and point out the features in which each excels.

7. Compare and contrast Jefferies' interest in the countryside with that of Thomas.

8. Compare Jefferies and Thoreau as observers of nature.

9. Compare Sullivan's picture of the north Canadian summer with Jefferies' picture of an English summer.

10. Compare the language and style of Bacon (early 17th century) with that of Stevenson (late 19th century).

11. What took Thoreau to Walden? To what extent do you find his outlook on life reflected in his essay *The Pond in Winter*?

12. Comment on the following:—

a. "It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours."

b. "There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business."

c. "I am for the synthetical method on a journey, in preference to the analytical." (Hazlitt.)

d. "Those distant years when Genoa and the Republic of St. Mark fought their duel to the death."

e. "To be beautiful and to be calm, without mental fear, is the ideal of nature."

f. "God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures."

g. "The mystic's trance, feeling out with infinite soul to earth and stars and sea and remote time and recognising his oneness with them."

13. Write essays upon:—

(*a*) The Joys of the Open Road. (Read Stevenson or Hazlitt first.)

(*b*) A Pond in Summer. (Read Thoreau first.)

(*c*) Primrosing. (Read Miss Mitford first.)

(*d*) Days of Spring. (Read Jefferies first.)

(*e*) Summer Rain. (Read Thomas or Raymond first.)

(*f*) A Sunset. (Read Symonds first.)

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